

Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren  
301 Gale Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
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The DECEMBER 2023  
**CARILLON**

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Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren  
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**Volume 23**  
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# DECEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

## ***First Sunday of Advent***

**December 3:** "Stay Awake" - Jim Benedict

**Worship Theme:** Jesus came in the "fullness of time" – and almost nobody noticed, perhaps because so many were so busy with their own concerns and not alert to that which they could not cause or control. At Advent, we are called to "stay awake" to what God is doing.

**Scripture Text:** Mark 13:24-37

## ***Second Sunday of Advent***

**December 10:** "Prophets Wanted" - Jim Benedict

**Worship Theme:** To someone, you may be the first or last person ever to tell them of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. You may be a voice crying in the wilderness that draws someone's attention to what God is really like.

**Scripture Text:** Luke 3:1-6

## ***Third Sunday of Advent***

**December 17:** "Go Ahead, Open It" - Jim Benedict

**Worship Theme:** Somewhere there is an inspiration, an idea, a skill or a potential waiting for you to discover it and use it. Somewhere there is a place for you in God's work.

**Scripture Text:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

**December 20: [Blue Christmas Service](#)** - Jim Benedict

On **Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.**, we will hold a special "Blue Christmas Service".

*"For many, Christmas is not 'The Most Wonderful Time of the Year' (as the song goes). A Blue Christmas Service can offer some healing and hope. The idea behind the Blue Christmas*

## Homage

"Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage."

Christmas, as it has come to be celebrated in our time, is a blended holiday—a blend of secular and religious traditions from many cultures. But even its biblical origins are an interesting mix, drawn from three gospels and the books of several Old Testament prophets. Some historical confusion arises as a result. For instance, as any good biblical commentary or scholar will tell you, the wise men that came to see the infant Jesus probably arrived several months after his birth. Still, in our nativity scenes they show up side-by-side with the shepherds on the very night Christ was born.

No doubt this bothers some purists, but it does not trouble me. Nit picking of this sort misses the point. Whenever they actually arrived, they came in the Christmas spirit. That is to say, they came to be in the presence of the newborn king and to "pay him homage." They came to honor him as the one chosen by God to lead God's people.

To pay homage is to show respect or deference, to demonstrate our esteem, or (as some versions put it) to worship. It is to give due recognition and honor to someone who is worthy of it. It is an act that is both humbling and exhilarating, because in the process of paying homage we touch holiness. We are put in touch with God's glory.

My prayer this Advent season is that we will all emulate the wise men and find ways to "pay homage" to the one whose birth we celebrate. And may our encounter with God's glory fill us with faith and hope that lasts all year.

Peace,

Pastor Jim

## Join us in person on Sunday mornings!

Stop by the Welcome Center for a cup of coffee, tea, or cocoa before Sunday School at 9 a.m.

Our Worship Service begins in the sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.

You may also join us via Zoom or Live Stream on the *Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren* YouTube Channel.

Bulletins and Hymn Lyrics are emailed on Friday mornings. Not on our email list? Call the church office at 717-766-8880 or email us at [mcob-secretary@verizon.net](mailto:mcob-secretary@verizon.net)

Worship videos are posted to our YouTube Channel and our Website on Sunday afternoons. Go to [www.mechanicsburgcob.org](http://www.mechanicsburgcob.org) and click on "messages". Follow us on Facebook.



**Sunday, January 7, 2024: Pew Communion**  
**Sunday, January 14, 2024: Remembrance Sunday**

*Service is to create space for the acknowledgment of the heaviness often carried during this season, as well as offering the hope that Jesus gives. Our society has become one of masking emotions that are sometimes considered negative. The Bible clearly acknowledges, celebrates, and makes space for pain, struggle, hardship, and tears – and so should we. The Blue Christmas Service is a beautiful way to make space during the advent season for those suffering any kind of loss – whether the loss of a person, a dream, finances, stability, health, or more."*

Our service will involve prayers, scripture reading, music and candle lighting to help us remember that God sent Jesus as light for those in darkness, and as a healer and friend for those who were hurting and lonely. Feel free to invite neighbors and friends you know who might be struggling this Christmas. This service, like God's love, is meant for everybody – those who may be struggling and those who wish to support others who are struggling.

### ***Fourth Sunday of Advent***

**December 24:** "The Best Christmas Ever" - Jim Benedict

**Worship Theme:** If you want the best gift of all, open your heart to God.

**Scripture Text:** Luke 8:2-20

### ***Christmas Eve Candlelight Service***

***7 p.m.***

**December 24:** "Son of God, Love's True Light"

- Jim Benedict

**Worship Theme:** In Bethlehem, after the shepherds left, Mary held in her arms a little bundle that was the Light of the World and she pondered what it all meant. Tonight, we will ponder what it means for us to have light and bear light, to be loved and forgiven, and to love and forgive others.

**Scripture Text:** Isaiah 9:2-7

**December 31:** *To Be Announced*

- Warren Eshbach

NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR  
*Noel Hallelujah Merry Christmas Happy New Year*



Bible Study continues on Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. by Zoom. Please check the calendar for specific dates. Contact Pastor Jim if you are interested in joining the group.



### **Sock & Mitten Tree**

**The Sock and Mitten Tree is up in the back-gathering area.** Please consider helping our neighbors in need by placing socks, mittens, hats, gloves or scarves to help keep little ones and their families warm during the winter months.

All items will be donated to "Operation Wildcat" for their Christmas baskets to be given to needy families within the Mechanicsburg Area School District.

**Deadline for items on the tree is Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>,** as volunteers will be packing the Christmas baskets that week.

You have all been generous in the past. Let us continue this tradition of helping others so everyone may have a warm and joyous Christmas holiday!



## **The Arts at Messiah University**

**December 1, 3, 8-10**

**Fall Senior Series: Works created and presented by theatre and dance department seniors**

**December 8th-February 4th**

**"Cover Design" by David Fassett.  
Extensive collection of book cover designs**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Messiah University Christmas Concert**

**December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Messiah University Musica Nova: Student Compositions**

**December 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Messiah University Guitar Ensemble  
Gavin Horning, director**

CHRISTMAS TREE  
FESTIVAL  
**CAMP**  
*Eder*

DECEMBER 8TH & 9TH 5-9PM

- CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & MUSIC
- HAY RIDES FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT 5-9PM
- TREE DECORATING CONTEST
- DELICIOUS TURKEY DINNER & SOUP (PER DONATION)
- LUMINARY GARDEN (HONORING OUR LOVED ONES)
  - DECORATED TREES
- WARM DRINKS AND LOTS OF COOKIES (FREE)
  - BAKE SALE
  - KID'S ACTIVITIES
- COZY FIRES & S'MORES
- LIVE MUSIC

"AND THIS IS THE TESTIMONY: GOD HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON." – JOHN 1:5-11

COME JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF FAMILY FESTIVE FUN! THE WOODS WILL BE ILLUMINATED WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, WARM FIRES, HOT COCOA AND CHILDREN ACTIVITIES WILL BE HAPPENING EACH NIGHT. THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL FESTIVAL YOU MOST CERTAINLY WILL NOT WANT TO MISS!

[WWW.CAMPEDER.ORG](http://WWW.CAMPEDER.ORG) 717-642-8256  
914 MT HOPE RD. FAIRFIELD, PA 17320

**Happy Birthday!**



You're invited to a birthday party!

It's a very exclusive invitation –  
only people God loves can attend.

Oh wait...that's everyone in the whole world?

I think we might need a bigger cake!

***Joyful Noise Worship Service***

**December 16, 2023 • 4-5 pm**

*No RSVP needed.*

**Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren**  
301 Gale Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055



### MCOB Christmas Luncheon

Please join us after worship on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> for our Christmas Luncheon. If attending, please sign the sheet in the Narthex as we need an accurate

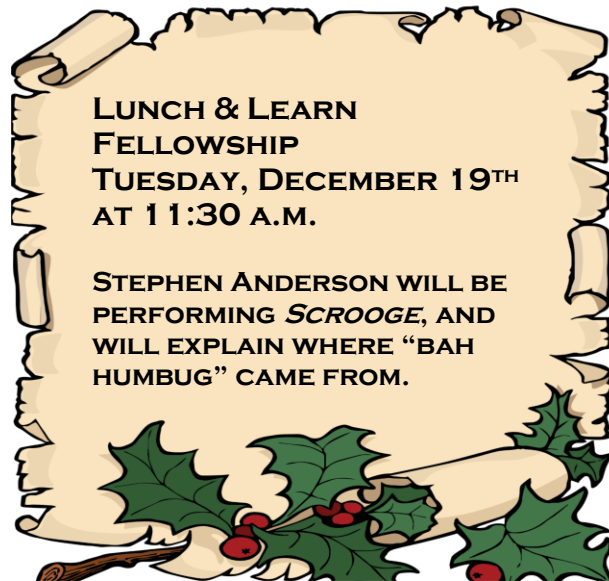
count as baked ham will be provided. We ask attendees to consider bringing a side dish and/or Christmas cookies. Cookies will be served for dessert and also bagged to distribute during our neighborhood caroling following the meal.

### Second Annual MCOB Neighborhood Caroling (approx. 1:30 PM)



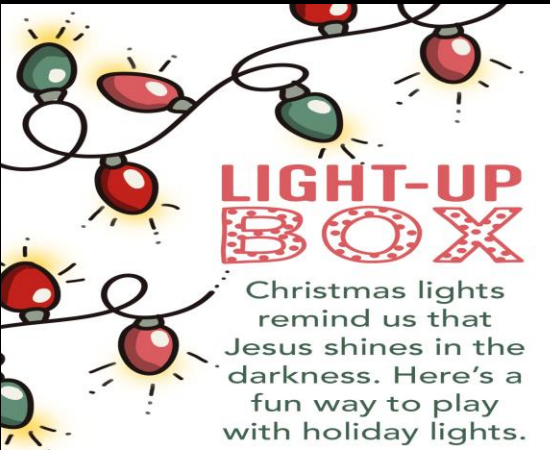
We hope many of you can stay after the meal to sing Christmas carols along with the MCOB Ensemble in the neighborhood around our church. This event, and the cookies we delivered last year, were a well-received part of our outreach efforts.

*Note that this event is weather dependent.*



**LUNCH & LEARN FELLOWSHIP**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>**  
**AT 11:30 A.M.**

**STEPHEN ANDERSON WILL BE PERFORMING *SCROOGE*, AND WILL EXPLAIN WHERE "BAH HUMBUG" CAME FROM.**




## LIGHT-UP BOX

Christmas lights remind us that Jesus shines in the darkness. Here's a fun way to play with holiday lights.

**What you need:**


- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads



**What you do:**

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
  - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
  - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
  - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.

Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!



## Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry 2023 Cookie Collection

### Calling all Bakers!

Mechanicsburg COB will provide cookies for this event. Bakers should prepare cookies to distribute by packing 5-6 cookies in zip-loc bags and then put into brown lunch bags (which may be decorated) for distribution.

(Colorful Christmas card fronts stapled to the bag are great!) We encourage you to enclose a friendly note, Bible verse or tract.

**Cookies should be at the church by December 10<sup>th</sup>** and then will be delivered to Carlisle on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Questions to Janet Zeiters.

**NOTE:** Due to ongoing COVID concerns, we are asking you to wear masks and gloves while preparing and packaging cookies, and that you seal the bags with staples, bows, etc.

Each bag should have either your church information or the Truck Stop Ministry contact information:

Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry, Inc.  
P.O. Box 851  
Carlisle, PA 17013-0851  
717-385-7932

Thank you for making this a great success!

\*Decorative Christmas lunch bags are available near the sign-up sheet in the narthex.



## New Hope Ministries **CHRISTMAS BLESSING EXPRESS**

where guests are able to shop for unwrapped gifts for the whole family. Collection boxes will be at both entrances on November 1<sup>st</sup> with "Wish Lists" attached to receive your donations **through Sunday, December 3rd.**

We also want to bless our guests with a Christmas 'Basket of Food'. Suggestions: ham, turkey, vegetables, gravy, potatoes, canned fruit, cranberry sauce, pie filling, pie crust, boxed stuffing, cereal and macaroni & cheese. Please place food items in the shopping cart in the sanctuary.

Turkey and Ham donations should be placed in the freezer in the kitchen with a note marked for "New Hope Ministries".

Questions to Linda Wevodau or any member of the Witness Team.

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### **CROP Walk Update**

We had 373 walkers and raised \$35,000 through the CROP Walk Hunger Walk held on October 22, 2023. WOW! What God can do when we simply extend an invitation for others to walk with us to serve the poor!

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Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren participates in the Family Promise Shelter Program. On our scheduled week, we provide lodging, meals, and hospitality to families in need.

Our next week of hosting will be **December 3<sup>rd</sup> through December 9<sup>th</sup>**. Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the narthex.

We need volunteers to drive the van, provide meals, and sleep overnight at the church. Contact Margie Fultz with any questions.

### **Family Promise is in need of items for the Day Center.**

Lists are available at the welcome center. Please place your donations in the bin located in the back-gathering area under the coat rack. Gift card to Sheetz, Giant, & Walmart are always welcome.



## Advent Outreach Program

### Heifer International

Check out the **Heifer International Living Gifts** tree display in the front gathering area and see how you can help others by providing food, a stove, clean water, animals, etc. in honor of a loved one this Christmas.

Choose an ornament from the tree in the amount of your choosing.

Write a check PAYABLE TO Heifer International, place in the envelope and drop in the wooden box at the display table and we will send your gift to Heifer International. The ornament can be presented to your recipient, envelopes are provided.

Or visit their website: [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org).

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>** is the last day for donations for the Heifer International Living Gifts program.

The Witness team thanks you for your generosity in helping those near and far.



**\*\* Your Church Needs YOU! \*\***



**Children's Disaster Ministries** finds our church facility perfect for holding one of their training sessions. Needed is a co-coordinator to set up such training for April 5-6 or April 12-13, 2024. One person has agreed to help but we need a leader.

Please notify the church office, Pastor Jim or a Witness Team member for more details.

Also needed are **representatives for New Hope Ministries**, especially to deliver the monthly food collections and a **representative for Brethren Disaster Relief Auction** held in September.

Please prayerfully consider where you can help and contact Oceana Goodwin or any Witness Team member.



**Wednesday,  
December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**



**Sunday,  
December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**





### **Advent meanings**

During Advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles that each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.

# December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> Fellowship Hall Reserved – All Day (SOPA District)	<b>2</b>
<b>3 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Food for New Hope</b> 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>6</b> 9a.m. Bible Study (Zoom) 9 a.m. Quilting 7:30 Choir <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>7</b> 6:30 p.m. Bells <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Family Promise</b>	<b>9</b> <b>Family Promise</b>
<b>10 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship	<b>11</b> 1 p.m. Knitting Group (Library) 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>12</b> 6/8 p.m. Fellowship Hall Reserved (John) 7 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting	<b>13</b> 9a.m. Bible Study (Zoom) 9 a.m. Quilting 11:30 a.m. Ladies Luncheon 7:30 Choir 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>14</b> 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>15</b> <b>January 2024 Newsletter Deadline</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Joyful Noise Worship 4/5 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)</b>
<b>17 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Advent Offering 11:30-2 pm Church Dinner &amp; Caroling</b>	<b>18</b> 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>19</b> 1 p.m. Caregiver Support Group (Library) 6/8 p.m. Fellowship Hall Reserved (John)	<b>20</b> 9a.m. Bible Study (Zoom) 9 a.m. Quilting <b>7 p.m. Blue Christmas Service</b> 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>21</b> 5/9 p.m. St. Joseph Basketball (FH)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>7 p.m. Christmas Eve Service</b>	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> 6/8 p.m. Fellowship Hall Reserved (John)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 
<b>31</b> 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship						

2023