

*Weekend of December 23 and 24, 2017*

**Bethlehem United Proclamation of the Gospel**

*Serving God's children who gather at:*

*Light of Christ  
Lutheran Church*

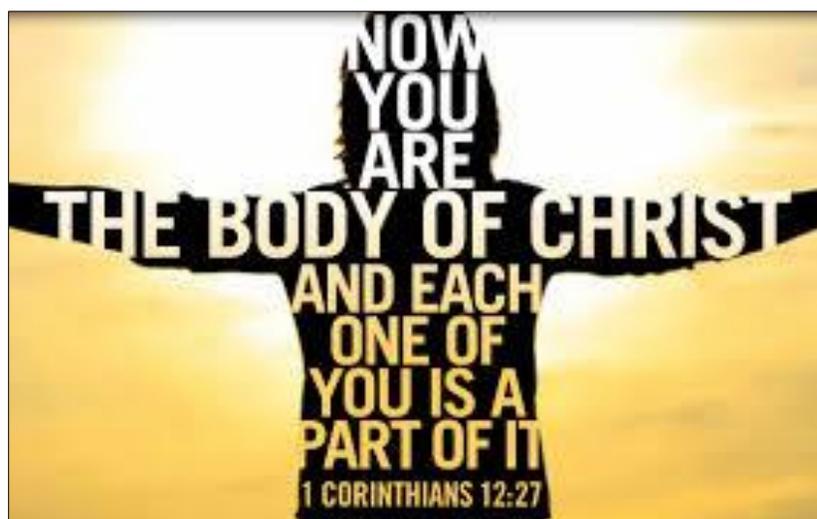


*St. Peter's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church*

**Pew News!**

*Whether a first-time guest with us or a life-long member, Pew News  
is a weekly publication for the family of Christ who gather at  
Bethlehem United Proclamation of the Gospel!*

**Check out our web sites at [messiahlutheran18017.org](http://messiahlutheran18017.org) or [stpetersbethlehem.org](http://stpetersbethlehem.org)  
and "like" us on Facebook!**



Greetings and peace to you all!

During this season of Advent, we have been on a “journey” if you will. A journey of our senses as we “hopefully anticipate” the coming of the Messiah! During this journey we have spoken of the senses of our body. In week 1 of Advent, we spoke about keeping our eyes open to not only witness to how God has acted in the world in the past, or how God will work in the future of the world, but rather to keep our eyes open to “see” how God is working in our present! In week 2 of Advent we spoke about using our “ears” to hear the voice of God crying in the wilderness. How you and I are asked to keep our ears open to the voices of the people in our society who speak a word of truth, a word of love, a word of mercy from the “outskirts” of main stream society. In week 3 of Advent we shared how we, like Mary, are invited to accept God’s invitation to usher in the kingdom of God into the very world in which we live.

On this Christmas Evening 2017 I offer some thoughts to share with you how I believe we the people of the United Proclamation of the Gospel have done on our Advent journey!

A brief look at our December calendar reveals some powerful insights:

- Nearly 50 of us gathered with over 100 others in Bethlehem to celebrate the season of Advent at the annual Community Advent Breakfast held at Moravian Village.
- Nine of our younger sisters and brothers in Christ received their first Holy Communion.
- UPG budgets were approved on both campuses and for the first time in recent history a surplus is anticipated for the coming year with efforts underway to see how that surplus can be used to benefit those in our community.
- A fellowship meal which “rang in the New Year” was held on our Light of Christ campus.
- The UPG adorned our sanctuaries for the season with over 30 people lending a helping hand.
- The UPG was involved in every week’s Advent mid-week offering to the people of CoMiT in some way. In total, these worship celebrations proclaimed God’s love to well over 300 people.
- The UPG hosted events in local restaurants (Taps, Palace Restaurant) to allow the world to see the fellowship that exists within our community.
- Bible Studies were held throughout the season with an excess 50 people on a weekly basis hoping to grow in their personal understanding of God and their relationship with one another!
- The children of Head Start received hats, mittens and books from people in the UPG and the children of MLCCC received wonderful educational opportunities to learn more about the birth of Christ.
- Over 40 children shared a “breakfast with Santa”, heard the Christmas story anew and had a wonderful time.
- Over 30 children came together to rehearse from across the UPG to prepare for their own celebration of Christmas Eve.
- Over 30 people gathered to sing Christmas carols to people who live in neighborhoods close to the United Proclamation of the Gospel.
- Nearly 50 families in our community received food from the UPG during the month of December.
- Nearly 40 people received a meal from the UPG at the Bethlehem Emergency shelter and others received food at Victory House from the UPG.
- Over 550 monthly publications were authored, published and distributed to people of the UPG.
- Over 750 weekly publications were authored, published and distributed to people of the UPG.
- Seven different agencies from around our community were able to host events within our facilities.
- A combined Youth Event (December 27) is planned and organized for the children of the UPG.

- Over 320 graves of veterans, buried in Fountain Hill Cemetery, had wreaths donated and now adorn their final resting places.
- Over 50 people were serviced at the Southside Thrift Shop during the month of December thanks to volunteers from the UPG.
- Over 1,000 people heard the Word of God proclaimed for their lives in our corporate worship experiences to this point in the UPG!

What do all these little “facts” share with the world about the UPG? That together we are making a difference in the world in which we live. That we are a vibrant and fiscally healthy community of faith which is focused on proclaiming the love of God through not only what we publicly proclaim with our mouths, but even more importantly what we proclaim with the manner in which we live our lives!

We are a community that offers to any and all many opportunities for individual believers to grow in the depth of faith and understanding of how God works in this world. We are a community that believes that the ground at the base of the cross is level and welcomes all into our midst regardless of age, gender, sexual identification, culture or background!

We are God’s Kids living in the town of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and we are just beginning to “scratch the surface” of “Who we can be and What we can accomplish” by working together to bring God’s reign into the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Peace and blessings for now

PJ





## UPG Christmas Worship

Celebrate the birth of our Lord throughout the UPG

December 23	5PM	Longest Night Worship	Light of Christ
December 24	10 AM	Lessons and Carols Joint Worship	St. Peter's
December 24	3 PM	UPG Children's Christmas Pageant Joint Worship	St. Peter's
December 24	4:30 PM	UPG Christmas Eve Fellowship Meal	St. Peter's
December 24	6 PM	UPG Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship	St. Peter's
December 24	8 PM	UPG Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship	Light of Christ
December 24	10:30 PM	UPG Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship	Light of Christ
December 25	10 AM	UPG Christmas Day Worship	Light of Christ
December 30	5 PM	UPG Saturday Evening Worship	Light of Christ
December 31	10 AM	UPG Lessons and Carols Joint Worship	Light of Christ

### Information for Christmas Eve at St. Peter's

**Worship Location and Elevator:** Worship is held in the nave of the church on the second floor. An elevator is available – the elevator entrance is at the lower end of the church parking lot.

**December 24 Parking:** Parking is available all day in the Lehigh University parking lot at Broadhead and Packer. The Broughal School garage is available for parking from 2-10PM.

**Important note:** The Broughal garage will be automatically locked at 10PM and after that time, no one will be able to exit or enter.

## UPG News

What another great week in the UPG! On Saturday the children of our community of faith gathered together to rehearse this year's children's pageant! Following their rehearsal, the children had "special visitors" of Santa and Mrs. Claus drop in on their celebration! Immediately following this wonderful event the UPG headed out to Fountain Hill Cemetery to take part in this year's "Wreaths Across America" remembrance. 325 gravesites of veterans were adorned with Christmas wreaths in thanksgiving for the service they provided us all. In the evening over 30 people gathered to sing Christmas Carols to our neighbors!

The staff has continued to work at a "frenzied" rate to prepare for the seven worship celebrations that will be offered this coming weekend to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We have also been busy preparing for the MLCCC Christmas chapel worship and sharing the hats, mittens and books with the children of Head Start.

Work has continued on collecting information for the annual reports of the UPG and the 60 households of our UPG homebound brothers and sisters in Christ continue to get visited.

The hopes and the prayers of your staff are that during this holy time of the year, you might feel a sense of community and a sense of awe at what God is doing within our midst.

PJ

## Recently in the UPG!



**Declan Michael was baptized  
at St. Peter's on December 17.**

**Declan, we welcome you  
into the Lord's family!**

**“Wreaths Across America” honored veterans by placing wreaths on 325 veterans’ graves at the Fountain Hill Cemetery.**



**Christmas Pageant rehearsal with a visit afterward from Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus!**

**Gift bags for Head Start students!  
Each child received a hat,  
mittens or gloves, and a book!  
Favorite titles included  
“Bedtime for Peppa Pig” and “Chicken Little”!**





**Voices of the Season!  
The UPG  
Christmas Carolers  
sang out  
on December 16!**

**Giving Tree with gifts for young hospital patients  
and residents at the  
Blough Health Care Center**



**Did you know...**

**MLCCC's Christmas Chapel began in 2008! The students sing songs and do finger plays taught by Lynn Terry and the teachers; Linda Maule accompanies the songs and Pastor Jerry gives a children's sermon.**

## **THIS WEEK IN THE UPG**

**Sunday December 24 through Monday January 1**

### **Today - Sunday December 24, 2017**

- 10:00 AM UPG Lessons and Carols Worship (St. P)
- 3:00 PM UPG Children's Christmas Pageant Worship (St. P)
- 4:30 PM UPG Christmas Eve Fellowship Meal (St. P)
- 6:00 PM UPG Traditional Christmas Eve Worship (St. P)
- 8:00 PM UPG Traditional Christmas Eve Worship (LoC)
- 10:30 PM UPG Traditional Christmas Eve Worship(LoC)

### **Monday December 25, 2017**

- 10:00 AM UPG Christmas Day Worship (LoC)

***Please Note: The UPG staff is working an "as needed" schedule this week.***

*You may call the office and leave a message if you need to speak with someone on staff.*

*Messages will be retrieved daily and appropriate care will be given.*

### **Tuesday December 26, 2017**

- 7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous (LoC)

### **Wednesday December 27, 2017**

- 4:00 PM UPG Youth Event at Sky Zone (Westgate Mall)

### **Thursday December 28, 2017**

- 7:00 PM Pastors and Guardians of Holy Israel Worship (St. P)

### **Friday December 29, 2017**

- 6:00 PM Lehigh Valley Christian Chinese Church Worship (St. P)

### **Saturday December 30, 2017**

- 5:00 PM UPG Saturday Evening Worship (LoC)
- 7:00 PM Pastors and Guardians of Holy Israel Worship (St. P)

### **Sunday December 31, 2017**

- 10:00 AM Joint UPG Lessons and Carols Worship (LoC)

### **Monday, January 1, 2018**

**OFFICES CLOSED – HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## Meet the Staff in the UPG

Our weekly "Meet the Staff" article shares information on staff members and their roles at St. Peter's, Light of Christ and within the UPG.

This week's staff member is **Linda Maule** who is the Minister of Music and Deacon for the UPG serving on the Light of Christ Campus. Here Linda tell us about the many facets of her work:

Since 2002, many of you have known me as an Associate in Ministry when I was called to serve Messiah's congregation, and most recently, to serve Light of Christ as a Word and Service lay leader. The Churchwide Assembly when it met in 2016, voted to combine the three expressions of rostered lay leaders (AiMs, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers) into one unified roster. Previous titles were eliminated and we are now known as Deacons; we continue to serve the church in the same way we have always served.



In my call to the Light of Christ campus of the UPG, I am primarily the church musician serving as organist for worship services and directing the senior choir and the chime choir. Both groups, especially the chime choir, need greater participation from members of the congregation to help us proclaim the good news. I schedule soloists and instrumentalists as the need arises and I provide support for the music of the Sunday school and the preschool. I also provide music for weddings, funerals and the Saturday evening worship service as needed.

Other pleasurable responsibilities include taking the sacrament to homebound members and visiting the sick in the hospitals and nursing homes. I also work with a very committed group of volunteers who plan and participate in the social ministry projects of outreach that our congregation supports.

## Share yourself with others!



**Baby Care Items Needed** for the Calvary Food Pantry on Dewberry Avenue. Please **bring your donation** of diapers, wipes, baby lotion, baby shampoo, baby wash, etc. **to the red narthex basket at LOC by Christmas Day.** Your contribution will go to help a family in need. Thank you very much!



**Light of Christ Giving Tree** Please consider taking a tag from the Giving Tree and purchasing the item suggested on the tag. Gifts for the residents of Blough Nursing Home should be wrapped. Please **DO NOT** wrap the stuffed toys/animals for the children (they should be **NEW**) - put them in a plastic or paper bag instead. **Please return your gift and its tag by Christmas Eve. Thank you!**

**The Calvary Food Pantry will be open on January 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9-11AM.** Food Pantry volunteers should arrive at 8:30AM. The Calvary Food Pantry is located at 111 Dewberry Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18017



### Synod Learning Ministries Day 2018 – January 27

The theme of this year's Learning Ministries Day is "***Church as Wonder-Land: Transforming Faith Communities from 'Places to Go for Answers' to 'Places to be with the Big Questions'.***" After opening devotions, keynote speaker Pastor Lori Kochanski (former NEPS Pastor and Assistant to the Bishop) presents "All Are Welcome: Celebrating Intergenerational Differences in the Church."

At morning and afternoon workshops, participants learn about new resources, learn a skill or attend a workshop for personal growth. LM Day is a wonderful day to meet other Lutherans in our synod – youth and adults alike. Lunch is provided for participants.

<b>Where</b>	Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church, 419 Bossardsville Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
<b>When</b>	January 27, 2018 from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM Snow Date: February 3
<b>Price</b>	Cost through December 31 is \$30 per person; from January 1-15, cost is \$45 per person.

Please register by January 15. For more information, please visit:  
<http://nepasynod.org/event/learning-ministries-day-2018/>

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**There will be no edition of the Pew News on December 31  
Look for the next edition on January 6!**