



BEAVER BLESSINGS

December 2024



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

"Welcoming all with God's love, serving all in God's name as we all grow in faith together"

Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church · 42 South 3rd Street · Lewisburg · PA · 17837

www.beavermethodist.org · (570)524-0809



Sunday Morning Worship Service - 11:00 am
New Beginnings Adult Sunday School Class – 9:30 am

From Pastor Sue's Desk:

Rev. Richard Fairchild uses the comparison of Waterford Crystal with Silly Putty to help us visualize that sometimes the best we can do is acknowledge that God exists, and we do not always understand why things happen as they do. He wrote: "I am sure most of you have seen Waterford Crystal. It is beautiful to look at. The only problem is when you drop it, it shatters into a thousand pieces and no matter how hard you try to glue the pieces back together, it never looks as beautiful as before it was dropped. Sometimes we get the idea that as human beings, we are like this crystal. We are lovely until we make a mistake or until tragedy happens. Then life shatters into a thousand pieces and can never be put back together just right – never put back the way God meant it to be. But if we compare human life to anything around us, we are better compared to Silly Putty than to crystal. Like Silly Putty we can be pulled apart, rolled into little balls, flung against the wall, or smashed flat. But like Silly Putty we can also be scraped back together again, forgiven, reworked, remolded and reshaped into someone that is even more beautiful. All of us have a place in God's plan, even when we cannot see it."

I share this because there are many things that happen to make our lives feel shattered. It might be the death of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, other beloved person or a beloved pet. It might be an injury or illness we or someone we love has. It might be a move made for a job, to go to school, or because of retirement. It might be a catastrophic event like a fire, flood, tornado, hurricane, or some other 'natural disaster.' It might be the constant broadcasting of information about all of the terrible things happening in the world, from local to global news. As we know, bad news gets lots more attention than good news.

So if we see ourselves as Waterford Crystal, once shattered, we have no hope. But if we see ourselves as Silly Putty, even if we are smashed flat, we have hope and we trust that God will indeed remold us into something new. Let us focus on what we have to be thankful for in the midst of all that is happening, most of which we have no control over. Let us work together as a faith family, helping as we can with our time, talent and treasure, and reaching out with the wide embrace of God to all of

God's children. Let us always put our trust in God, who loves us unconditionally, who came to earth in the person of Jesus to show us how to live, and who sent the Holy Spirit to be present with us always.

DECEMBER FEATURES

► What is Advent about? By Ryan Dunn (adapted by Pastor Sue)

Advent is the season in the church year when we anticipate what the world is becoming. It's the most wonderful time of the year, isn't it? We're waiting for the big day to come--a day sure to be full of joy, reflection and peace. Right? You're likely thinking I'm alluding to Christmas Day--which, in our United Methodist tradition, like most other Christian denominations, is observed on December 25. Culturally, Christmas is the big focus this time of year. Even in the church, our congregations are preparing for their Christmas observances and celebrations. It might surprise some to learn that Advent only kind of partially has anything to do with Christmas.

Advent is a time of heavy anticipation. It focuses on waiting for a big occurrence. But the anticipated occurrence is not actually fully realized on Christmas Day. During Advent we're anticipating the full realization of something that began on the first Christmas, but isn't yet fully realized, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, even though we don't know the actual date of his birth. Technically the liturgical season of Christmas begins on December 25, And it's important to note that distinction so we can be fully mindful of the hope that faith speaks into our human experience.

How did Advent begin?

The word "advent" derives from the Latin "adventus", meaning "coming." During its earliest observances, Advent was 40 days of repentance, fasting and prayer as new believers prepared for their baptisms. Oftentimes, these baptisms took place on the day of Epiphany--which is the day that marks the Magi's visit to baby Jesus and is a celebration of Jesus' incarnation on Earth. In later years, Christians began tying Advent not just to Christ's incarnation, but to an anticipated second coming of Christ. Advent became a period for renewing the sense of anticipation in longing for Jesus' return.

Today, Advent is a period of preparation for both "advents", or arrivals, of Jesus. Lester Ruth, a professor at Duke Divinity School and a historian of Christian worship, offered this explanation: "The simplest way I have to distinguish between Advent and Christmas is that advent uses the word "come" as a longing petition, expressed in anticipation, whereas Christmas is a commemorative reflection on how the Lord has come in Christ's birth and thus the trigger for a new redemptive order has begun."

In our culture, the close ties to Christmas seemingly outweigh the anticipation of another "advent" of Jesus. We conflate the Christmas commemoration and the anticipation of Advent. Ignoring this "second coming" removes some of the urgency of our Christian call to enact God's love and justice on Earth.

What do we mean by "Second Coming"?

Most Christian creeds of faith contain some derivation of the following statement: "Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead." In The United Methodist Church, we make that affirmation as prelude to the revealing of the new creation. So when Christ returns, a renewed creation comes too. This new creation is marked by the unity of Creator and created alluded to in the book of Genesis. In

the New Testament, this renewed creation is aligned with freedom from death, sin and decay. So the renewed creation takes the shape of a world without the bounds of death and liberated from the systems and actions through which humans tear themselves apart from one another and from God. There's a lot of hope inspired by believing that such a world is possible. Advent is a season for reflecting on and renewing that hope.

What do we do during Advent?

Perhaps our Advent observances could benefit from a greater emphasis on the advent that is yet to come, and a diminished emphasis on the advent remembered in our Christmas celebrations, as there's time for that when Christmas actually arrives. So how can we re-orient ourselves towards longing this Advent?

One of the ways we reflect on Advent in communal worship is by utilizing an Advent wreath: a simple wreath surrounding four exterior candles and one central candle. The four exterior candles represent the hallmarks of a renewed creation: joy, hope, peace and love. The central candle represents the presence of Christ. Each Sunday, one more of the exterior candles is lit. Finally, the Christ candle is lit as a reminder of Christ's ongoing presence. We can also bring this practice into our homes, creating our own Advent wreaths and contemplating our own longings for more joy, hope, peace and love.

We also utilize music for reflection, as many songs communicate our Advent longings. Unfortunately, these songs are overshadowed during this season by songs that are explicitly Christmas-themed. Take time to listen to some more Advent-aligned songs and notice the expectations and longings they communicate. Weekly or daily devotionals offer opportunities for an explicit focus on a topic. Our friends at UpperRoom.org offer a free daily devotional that is Advent-focused during this season. Our friend Shane Claiborne also recommends CommonPrayer.net. It offers daily prayers speaking into our Advent expectations. You are encouraged to use one or both of these during this Advent season.



➤ What is an Advent Wreath?

The Advent wreath is one of the most symbolic traditions for the season of Advent. With its colorful candles lit on each of the four weeks of Advent, the wreath is a reminder of the hope and joy coming.

Circular shape: The circular shape represents the eternal nature of God-His never-ending love, mercy, and faithfulness. It also symbolizes the unending cycle of the seasons and the continuous nature of time.

Evergreen Branches: Evergreen branches, which do not lose their leaves in winter, represent the everlasting life found in Christ. They are a symbol of hope and renewal, pointing to the promise of eternal life through Jesus.

Lighting of Candles: The lighting of the candles is lit to symbolize the increasing anticipation and preparation for the arrival of Jesus. The light from the candles represents the light of Christ coming into the world.

First Sunday of Advent: The Candle is Purple and symbolizes Hope. Also known as the ‘Prophecy Candles’ in memory of the prophets, particularly Isaiah, who prophesied the birth of Christ. It symbolizes the anticipation felt in awaiting the coming Messiah. The color purple is often associated with this candle. Purple is a liturgical color that symbolizes penance, preparation, and royalty. It serves as a reminder of the need for repentance and readiness for the coming of the Messiah, who is the King of Kings.

Second Sunday of Advent: The color is Purple and symbolizes Peace. Also known as the “Bethlehem Candle,” signifies Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. Sometimes the second week’s candle is used to symbolize faith. The Peace Candle symbolizes the peace that Jesus Christ brings to the world. It represents the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a Messiah who would be the Prince of Peace.

Third Sunday of Advent: The color is Pink and symbolizes Joy. Also known as the “Shepherd’s Candle.” The third Sunday of Advent is meant to remind us of the world’s joy at the birth of Jesus and that the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent. The third week of Advent is often known as “Gaudete Sunday,” derived from the Latin word “Gaudete,” which means “rejoice.” It is a time of rejoicing and heightened anticipation as Christmas draws nearer. The Joy Candle represents the joy that filled the hearts of the shepherds who received the news of Jesus’ birth from the angels. It signifies the happiness and excitement of the world as it receives the long-awaited Messiah.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: The color is purple and marks the last week of Advent as we anticipate the birth of our Savior. This final candle, also known as the “Angel’s Candle,” signifies love. It reminds us of the angels’ message: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.”

The Christ Candle: The color is White symbolizing purity, light, restoration, and holiness. It is placed in the center of the wreath. It is typically lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to represent the arrival of Jesus Christ, who is seen as the “Light of the World” Jesus Christ is the righteous, immaculate, pure Savior. He is the light that comes into a dark and depraved world. He is often described in the Bible wearing bright, profoundly white robes, like snow, and shining with the brightest of light.

BEAVER MINISTRIES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE**Beacon Free Shop**

Beacon Free Shop distributed over 900 personal hygiene items to community members on Saturday, November 16, 2024. A record 103 households were served! 246 individuals make up these households. 43% of the households served reside in Union County, and 41% from Northumberland County. However, Beacon served a family from as far away as McClure, western Snyder County.

Special thanks to Pastor Sue for knitting 25 scarves, which were available to the Beacon clients, and were gobbled up quickly. Also, thanks to the United Youth Group for providing two volunteers to help with inventory control. As always, thank you to our volunteers, and the Beaver congregation for their monetary and inventory donations. This mission only exists because of your generosity. The next Beacon Free Shop will be held on Saturday, December 21 from 10am to 12 noon.

New to You Free Shop

Our November event saw 67 people getting items for their 158 household members. Again, linens were the most popular items. All the comforters and bed blankets were taken, as well as the towels and many of the sheets. Lots of the clothing and most of the kitchen items were taken, too. We purged some of the clothing, especially men's dress shirts which do not seem as desirable as other items. We put out a few toys that were left from our October day, and many of those went as well. We also included Christmas decorations from those we no longer use at Beaver, and all but a few Christmas balls were taken. We took the remainder of the Christmas items and toys as well as the clothing to Community Aid, so hopefully someone will still find things they can use there. We had lots of help on Friday to set up. Thanks especially to those who stepped in to help in the absence of our 5 regulars who were not available. First Baptist had several of their regulars who could not attend, too, so those who came were especially important. We had plenty of help during the event but could have used a few more for cleaning up. Our next New to You Day is February 15th. That means set-up is the 14th. Please mark your calendars and come out to help if you possibly can. We really need and appreciate your time in volunteering to help. There will be a sign-up sheet in the sanctuary at the start of February, or you can contact me at hoodj1973@ptd.net or 570-713-4659. Donations will be accepted the Sunday before after worship, on Friday during set-up or by calling me to set up a time. Thanks, Patty

Busy Beaver

Busy Beaver is very excited for the upcoming Christmas holiday! We will be doing our 12 days of Christmas with the children and staff. Each day is a special day when we either wear something festive or do something fun! The children will get a small gift this year again from Santa Claus. Santa makes his appearance each year during our Christmas party. We are looking for a Santa Claus this year, so if anyone knows anyone willing to help us out, please reach out to

Charlene @ director.bbdcc@beavermethodist.org

After a successful Gertrude Hawk Fundraiser with almost \$4000 in sales, the candy will be delivered the week of December 2nd. A date will be announced when we know specifics. Thanks to all who ordered! Busy Beaver would like to thank: Patty Johnston, Chuck and Martha Root, Christy Emigh, Jan Field, Ruth Shrawder, Cathy and Dennis Hause, Caroline Campagna, David Deibler-Gorman, Rev. Sue Jamison, and Pastor Ethan Shearer for all their help with our Thanksgiving feast! We appreciate you all so very much!

Charlene Reigle Director, Busy Beaver Daycare Center

United Youth Group

The UYG had a busy November with a remix lesson, helped with an Operation Christmas Child box packing, helped at the Beacon shoppe, played in a ping pong "tournament", and watched a movie. In December it is all about Christmas prep and Christmas parties.

Sunday, December 1 – 11:30 am to 2:00 pm – Lunch & Decorating the Youth Room at Christ's Lutheran Church.

Monday, December 9 – 6:30 pm – Mini Mission – Ornament and Card Making at Christ's Lutheran Church

Thursday, December 12 - 4:00 pm - Help with Illumination at Riverwoods

Sunday, December 15 – 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm – Advent Hike at Camp Mount Luther with a Christmas Party hosted by the Synod Youth Team

Sunday, December 22 – 5:30 pm - Youth Christmas Party/Dinner/Gift Exchange at Christ's Lutheran

Blue Christmas Potluck

Not everyone has someone to celebrate with during the Christmas season, and the short daylight hours make it harder to find joy. Pastor Ethan and his wife Beth want to invite everyone to gather together to share good food and good company on the longest night of the year, Dec. 21st, for a potluck. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share – whether it's your favorite winter comfort food, a holiday treat, or something new you've been wanting to test! Please use the sign-up sheet on the table at the front of the church to let us know that you're coming and if you're bringing anything. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

Cardboard Tubes Needed!

Beth Shearer is planning something exciting for next year's VBS and we need your help. Please save the cardboard tubes from paper towels and wrapping paper (but NOT toilet paper tubes as they are too small) and bring them to church. Place them in the big black bin located in the sanctuary. Thanks!

Flowers for the Vases

If you enjoy the beautiful flowers displayed in the vases each Sunday, please consider signing up to sponsor flowers. You can use the signup sheet on the table at the front of the sanctuary or contact the church office for available dates. We are requesting one vase per week at the cost of \$45.

Join Our Tech Team!

If you would be willing to learn how to use the cameras on Sunday mornings, please let one of the tech team (Nick Persing, Todd Fogle, or Deena Eberhart) know. They will train you and promise it is not difficult. Help us keep connected with those who are not able to join us in person on Sunday mornings.

Musicians/Vocalists Wanted!

If you would be willing to provide special music on occasion for Sunday worship, please let Brooke Persing know. We want to have a nice variety: vocal, instrumental, and combinations of those – we know there is talent among us. Vocal Choir rehearsals are held September through May, usually on Wednesdays at 7:00PM in the Choir Room on the lower level.

We Have Convenient Methods of Giving!

Mail to Beaver Memorial at 42 S. 3rd St. Lewisburg, 17837
 Drop into our Drop Box outside the office door

Go to our website: www.beavermethodist.org and click on “Giving “Thank you!

EVENTS

AT BEAVER MEMORIAL UMC			
Event	Day/Date	Time	Location
New Beginnings Adult Sunday School	Sunday	9:30 AM	Hall of All Peoples
Children/Youth Sunday School	Sunday	10:00 AM	St. Paul’s UMC
NA Meeting	Monday	7:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
Leadership Team Meetings	3 rd Tuesday of the month	6:30 PM	Fellowship Hall
Choir Practice	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Choir Room
NA Meeting	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Fellowship Hall
AA Meeting	Saturday	7:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
Beacon Shop	3 rd Saturday of the month	10:00 AM	Beaver Memorial UMC
IN THE COMMUNITY			
Event	Day/Date	Time	Location
Dinner by the River	1 st Thursday of the month	5:30 PM	1 st Presbyterian Lewisburg

BMUMC Staff:

Position	Individual	Position	Individual
Church Administrator	Tiffany Heimbach	Treasurer	Shirley Brough
Custodian	Jim Gulden		
Choir Director	Brooke Persing	Accompanist	Sabastian Stewart
Busy Beaver Day Care Director	Charlene Reigle	United Youth Group Director	Charlene Rineer
Video Team	Nick Persing, Todd Fogle, Deena Eberhart		
Leadership Team	Martha Root - croot@bucknell.edu Rev. Sue Jamison - sjamison@susumc.org Rev. Ethan Shearer – eshearer@susumc.org Ralph Hibbs - rhibbs@windstream.net Patty Johnston - hoodj1973@ptd.net David Deibler-Gorman - dgorman@windstream.net Gabrielle Taylor – taylorfamily@ptd.net Heidi Gilmore – heidicgilmore@gmail.com Kathy McKibben – klmckibben@gmail.com Chuck Root – croot@bucknell.edu Nick Persing – persing191983@gmail.com Travis Curry – traviscurry@yahoo.com		

➤ Submit content for the newsletter to tlcinhisservice@yahoo.com by the 18th of the month prior to the newsletter.