

THE LAMPSTAND

Mellingers Evangelical Lutheran Church
80 Gockley Road ✝✝ Stevens, PA 17578



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Hope.....Again

This year Christians will celebrate the birth of Christ for the two thousand and twenty-sixth time. In those 2,026 years there have been countless wars. Billions of people have died. (Did you know that there are more people who have died than are currently living?) Estimates project there are currently 8.3 billion people alive today on Planet Earth. And while it is, of course, much harder to estimate how many people have died from the beginning of time, there is an estimate that about 109 billion people have died since humans appeared.

And all the while, every year for the last 2,026 years, Christians around the world continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the Hope and Light that has come into the world and remains with us now in the Holy Spirit and will be fulfilled at the end of time when Christ comes again.

This, in itself, is a miracle. The fact that people continue to have hope when nothing ever seems to change; wars, disease and man's inhumanity to man.

Christians, however, have a stubborn habit of believing in the goodness of God....have a tendency to look at and focus on the beauty of creation and of all the blessings that we receive from Almighty God.

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

January's newsletter article deadlines will be Thursday December 17

Your articles can be emailed in the formats of Word or PDF to:
mellingerslutheran@gmail.com

To pessimists, who refer to themselves as realists, this is annoying. For Christians, it is liberating!

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen."

When Jesus was born there were angels. The shepherds were afraid at first. But then they praised God. That's sort of what Christians do. We are afraid at first and then praise God. Jesus was never rich by the world's standards. He was born in a lowly place. His mother was a

young woman of no particular distinction except that she believed the angel when she was told she would give birth to the Savior of the world. This too is like us....most of us are not rich or famous....but as we believe in the birth, the presence of Jesus in our lives we have hope ~ again, again and again.

The great remarkable fact of life is not that people get discouraged and doubt. The great remarkable fact of life is that despite all the bad things that happen and have happened for thousands of years, Christians still believe in the baby Jesus, the man Jesus, the Savior Jesus.

We don't have to understand hope to have it. Faith is a gift from God. Ephesians 2: 8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Faith and hope are our Christmas presents from God, wrapped not in gift paper but in a manger. Every day. This doesn't mean that we won't doubt. But it does mean that we will have hope. Again.

In Christ, Pastor Tim

Bible Readings for the month of December

December 6—2 Advent: Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13, 2 Peter 3:8-15a & Mark 1:1-8

December 13—3 Advent: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 & John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20—4 Advent: 2 Samual 7:1-11, 16, Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26, Romans 16:25-27 & Luke 1:26-38

December 24—*Christmas Eve*: Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14 & Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

December 25—*Christmas Day*: Isaiah 62:6-12, Psalm 97, Titus 3:4-7 & Luke 2:[1-7]8-20

December 27—1 Christmas: Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4:4-7 & Luke 2:22-40

Hymn of the Month for December

The History of Advent



(Representation of Saint Perpetuus)

It is not known when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent began. It was certainly in existence from about 480 – and the novelty introduced by the Council of Tours of 567 was to order monks to fast every day in the month of December until Christmas. It is "impossible to claim with confidence a credible explanation of the origin of Advent".

Associated with Advent as a time of penitence was a period of fasting, known also as the Nativity Fast or the Fast of December.

According to Saint Gregory of Tours the celebration of Advent began in the fifth century when the Bishop Perpetuus directed that starting with the St. Martin's Day on 11 November until Christmas, one fasts three times per week; this is why Advent was sometimes also named "Lent of St. Martin". This practice remained limited to the diocese of Tours until the sixth century.

But the Macon council held in 581 adopted the practice in Tours and soon all France observed three days of fasting a week from the feast of Saint Martin until Christmas. The most devout worshipers in some countries exceeded the requirements adopted by the Council of Macon, and fasted every day of Advent. The homilies of Gregory the Great in the late sixth century showed four weeks to the liturgical season of Advent, but without the observance of a fast. However, under Charlemagne in the ninth century, writings claim that the fast was still widely observed.

In the thirteenth century, the fast of Advent was not commonly practiced although, according to Durand of Mende, fasting was still generally observed. As quoted in the bull of canonization of St. Louis, the zeal with which he observed this fast was no longer a custom observed by Christians of great piety. It was then limited to the period from the feast of Saint Andrew until Christmas Day, since the solemnity of this apostle was more universal than that of St. Martin. When Pope Urban V ascended the papal seat in 1362, he simply forced people in his court to abstinence but there was no question of fasting. It was then customary in Rome to observe five weeks of Advent before Christmas. This is particularly discussed in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory. Ambrosian or Milan Liturgies have six. The Greeks show no more real consistency; Advent was an optional fast that some begin on 15 November, while others begin on 6 December or only a few days before Christmas.

The liturgy of Advent remained unchanged until the Second Vatican Council introduced minor changes, differentiating the spirit of Lent from that of Advent, emphasizing Advent as a season of hope for Christ's coming now as a promise of his Second Coming.

Submitted by Vickie Kissinger

Choir & Bells Practice dates:

Chancel Choir November 25 at 6:15 pm
6:00 pm - December 2, 9, 16 & 23

Bell Choir at 7:00 pm - December 2, 9, 16 & 23



Our Praise Band Ahava will be playing Sunday December 20



Bell Ringers needed for Advent and Christmas Eve!
Let me know if you are interested in ringing bells.
You do NOT need to be able to read music.
I look forward to seeing you ring!



Parish Notes

Decorating the Church, Christmas Party and Congregational Meeting

'Tis the Season. We are hoping to see everyone on December 6th after worship we will be decorating the Church for the Season.

There will be no Coffee Social in the Library as we will have the Christmas Party at 11:00 in the Social Hall. If you are planning to attend please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex by Sunday November 29th or call the Church office (717)-336-8800.

On December 13th after worship we will have our Annual Congregational Meeting at which time we will elect Church Council members and discuss the 2027 Resource Allocation (Budget). We hope to see you participating in these important congregational events.

December 20th Ahava will be playing music during our worship service.

Christmas Worship

December 24 4:00 pm Family-oriented Service of Holy Communion
December 24 7:00 pm Candlelight Service of Holy Communion

PRAYER CORNER

Please pray for the following people:

Rodger Sweigart, Dave Haldeman, Melanie Brubaker, Ethel Sensenig, Jane Pittman, Kelsey Reed Butler, Gil Hulshizer, Theda Raffauf, Lori Oberholtzer, Deb Emberger, Tom Parrish Sr., Kelly Parrish, Jay Weaver, Jay Stoltzfus, Ruth Hollinger, Fay Weitzel, Shannon Brown, Shirley Sweigart, Molly Brown, Carl Mohler Jr., Elaine Haldeman, Clair Miller, Mary Weidman, and Marty Leed & Family.

Clifton Center in Philadelphia: Mike Sawyer
Gardens at Stevens: Nevin McQuate
Ephrata Manor: Iris Weaver, Dorothy Hutchinson, Shirl Tobias and Pauline Sawyer
Luther Acres Health Care: Judy Meckley
Phoebe Berks: Nick Rampolla
Keystone Villa: Betty Firestine & Janet Hirneiser
Maple Farms: Vivian Gehr
Mifflin Center Rehab, Shillington: Barb Moyer
Neffsville Rehab & Nursing: Pauline Martin

Please pray for those in the Armed Forces: Chris Weidman

Please pray for friends and family at home:

Pastor Matt Lenahan, Brenda Gabig, Denise Hoffer, Denise Good, Kathy Lindman, Mary Morton, Pastor Dave Miller, Mary Thorn, Sheri Kiefer, Sam McClearen, Scott Coleman, Wendy Bentz, Nancy Good, Kevin Gavin, Brenda Reed, Doris McNally, Brandi Erhart, Deb Correa, Brooke Stewart, Mary Lou Crum, Lorna Buohl, William Sockriter, Doug Cody, Brenda Sweigart, Nancy Bolotine, Karen Leonhard, Mary Sanger, Brian Kerns, Curtis Townsley, Robyn Redcay and Margaret Weller.

Pray also for the grieving families of:

Charles Roberts, Russell Shirker, Tina Strepko, Donna Sensenig, Barry Kreider, Dave Bentz, Eugene Hackman, Pat McQuate, Leroy Landis, Marion Dissinger, Helen Blank, Mike Leed, Nicole Bibbus, Rob French, Donna Kennedy, Robert Hackman, Marion Briere, Carl Usner and Peggy French.

COUNCIL NOVEMBER 12, 2026

Lowell Yost called the November meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Linda Weaver gave the devotion by reading Psalm 23 and lead us in prayer.

A correction was noted from October's Meeting, Cocalico Builders of Hope was said to have purchased a house. They have not purchased one, they are still looking to purchase one in the Cocalico School District.

Pastor Tim will attend a ceremony in December to accept the Brossman Sweigart Grant. We applied for this grant to be put toward the Parking Lot Fund.

Lowell Yost attended the Social Ministry Meeting and thanked the members for all they do for the church and community.

Three members have agreed to serve on Council next year and will be voted on at the Congregation Meeting in December.

The Thanksgiving Eve offering will go to Cocalico Builders of Hope.

Next meeting is Thursday December 17th at 6:30 pm. We adjourned the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

NOTE: Builders of Hope is still looking for a house. Anyone with information about a house for sale they can contact Bob Getz.

Usher Schedules for December

December 6: Head – Troy Adair, Randy Brubaker and Alternate Ben Gunzenhauser

December 13: Head – Vic Richard, Nancy Eberly and Alternate Jean Lausch

December 20: Head – Hayden Leonhard, Kristi Leonhard and Alternate Dave Weidman

December 24 *Christmas Eve***: Head –** Lowell Yost, Linda Weaver and Alternate Jill Showalter

December 27: Head – Troy Adair, Vic Richard and Alternate Joan Moore

January 3, 2027: Head – Nancy Eberly, Mike Haller and Alternate Shawn Jeffers

January 10, 2027: Head – Hayden Leonhard, Kristi Leonhard and Alternate Ben Gunzenhauser

Sunday School Scoop



~ During the past few months, our children's Sunday School class studied several Bible stories including: Noah's Ark, Jonah & the Big Fish, Queen Esther, and Daniel In The Lions' Den.

We explored these stories by reading the Bible and expanded on these themes through games, art and even creating snacks related to our stories.

~ At the end of November the kiddos will began creating decorations for Christmas which we will use to adorn our classroom tree during the Hanging of the Greens on December 6th.



~ We will finish out our 2026 classes learning about the birth of our Savior with the use of Bible stories and fun interactive activities.

** NOTE: There will be no Sunday School classes on December 27th **

Christmas Gifts for Children



You choose the gift of your choice for newborn up to the age of 15 years old. Return new and unwrapped gifts to the church by Sunday December 13th.

Suggested gifts include coloring books, puzzle books, body wash/lotion and diapers for newborns, toys etc.

There will be boxes to put the items in by the Sanctuary door in the Narthex. We will deliver them to EASS for their Santa's Room Program. Children will come in and choose the gift they want.

Thank you and God Bless,

Social Ministry.



2027 Giving Envelopes

You will find your envelopes in your mailbox.





Sunday
December 6, 13, 20 & 27
9:00 am Church Services

December 6th Hanging of the Greens after worship
11:00 am Church Christmas Party in the Social Hall

December 13th Annual Congregational Meeting after worship

December 20th Ahava playing during worship service

Monday
December 14th 5:30 pm Social Ministry Christmas Party at Gus's in Ephrata

Tuesday
December 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29
6:30 – 8:00 pm Pastor Tim Zoom Bible Study

Wednesday
December 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30
1:30 – 3:00 pm In Person Bible Study at Mellingers in the Library

Thursday
December 17th 6:30 pm Council Meeting
December 24th 1:30 pm Pastor Tim at Gardens at Stevens
4:00 pm Family Service with Holy Communion
7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Holy Communion

Scout Troop 115 Calendar

December 21: Christmas Party

2027

February 7: Scout Sunday

March 6: Spaghetti Dinner

Joe Brubaker is currently on the North Lancaster Mission trip to North Carolina.



The Origin of the Christmas Tree



The Christmas tree has a rich history, woven with traditions and legends. Although its exact beginnings are difficult to trace, evergreen branches have long served as symbols of life and hope during the darkest days of winter.

The custom of decorating Christmas trees developed in German-speaking Europe centuries ago. Early trees were adorned with simple decorations such as apples, paper ornaments, and sweets. German immigrants later brought the tradition to America, where it took root in communities such as those in Pennsylvania.

For Christians, the evergreen can symbolize the eternal life we receive through Christ. The Christmas tree can also remind us of the "tree" on which Jesus gave His life for our salvation. As Peter wrote: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24, ESV).

The forbidden fruit of the tree in the Garden of Eden, when eaten, brought guilt and death. On the other hand, the "tree" on Calvary was the instrument by which God through Christ ushered in salvation, new life and hope.

The Christmas tree can remind us of those wonderful gifts.

thank you

Dear Family of Mellinger
Thank you for everything that was given to me for Thanks Giving and Christmas the Plant is lovely. Thank you Fay for delivering the things and for a nice visit
Barb Meyer

To Pastor Tim and members of Mellingers.

Thank you all for the help and support you gave us both last Sunday when I sort of passed out. I did not have to worry about Elaine, you took good care of her too.

We have a Great church family here at Mellingers
Thanks again
Dave & Elaine
Baldeman

Dear Pastor Tim + Mellingers Congregation,
Thank you so much for your caring + concern ~ and especially your prayers during my hospitalization and more recent heart procedure. I continue to heal + feel stronger daily. Your prayers and Christian love mean so much.
A special thanks to the Social Ministry Committee for the card and beautiful Cross book mark.
Thank you
Mel Brubaker
Pastor Tim, I appreciated your visits so much!



Dear Mellingers Family
Thank-you to all who sent me Birthday Cards. They Made my day Special. I have read them Many times since. God Bless you all the way he has blessed me for my many years
Ruth (Steffy) Mellinger

DECEMBER Birthdays

December 1
Scott Engle
Jeffrey Gehman
Elle Sawyer

December 2
Kellie Nichols

December 4
Thomas Parrish

December 6
Caitlin Stafford

December 7
Polly Gunzenhauser

December 8
Alex Emberger
Martha Petery

December 9
Judy Hibshman

December 13
Nathan Nichols

December 15
Mary Weidman

December 16
Barbara Getz
Verna Kieffer

December 17
Mary Latshaw
Melissa Weber

December 19
Zoey Cruz

December 22
Paige Moyer-Derr
Randy Zerbe

December 26
Lynn Spotts

December 27
Shawn Jeffers
Whitney Zerbe
Wendy Zerbe

December 28
Jonah Hogan

December 29
Gail Harker
Douglas Leed

December 31
Haleigh Leisey



December 18
Grace Burkholder

December ANNIVERSARIES

<u>December 4</u>
Michael & Judy Hibshman

<u>December 16</u>
Michael & Lisa Reed



<u>December 6</u>
Chris & Tess Freeman

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1 Maddy Brown & Ruth Buchter
January 2 Ashley Leed
January 3 Sherry Stewart

Important contact information

Peace be with you!

SERVICE TIMES
Sunday
Worship Service
9 am

MINISTERS: The people of Mellingers

STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Timothy Craven (717) 738-3838 Cell: (717) 468-9049
Director of Christian Education: Diane Adair (717) 715-3124
Director of Music: Vickie Kissinger (717) 354-6575 vickiekissinger@gmail.com
Secretary: Ashley Weinhold (717) 336-8800 mellingerslutheran@gmail.com
Treasurer: Jon Hogan (814) 289-1646

CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Lowell Yost (717) 471-7758 **Vice-President:** Troy Adair (717) 715-3126

Randy Brubaker (717) 314-3449	Nancy Eberly (717) 945-2895	Ben Gunzenhauser (717) 733-6414
Mike Haller (717) 368-1572	Shawn Jeffers (717) 278-5000	Hayden Leonhard (717) 468-5549
Kristi Leonhard (717) 940-7535	Vic Richard (717) 951-8977	Linda Weaver (717) 587-1319

Recording Secretary: Ashley Weinhold (717) 336-8800

LEADERS

Altar Guild: Kimberley Craven Chair: (717) 738-3838
Blood Pressure Check Coordinator: Susan Specht (717) 336-4601
Camp Person: Kimberley Craven (717) 738-3838
Coffee Social: Kristi Leonhard (717) 940-7535
Communion Set-Up: Lisa Reed (717) 341-1663
Finance Committee: Vic Richard (717) 951-8977, Pat Haller (717) 368-4975, Nancy Eberly (717) 945-2895
Financial Secretary: Jill Showalter (717) 336-2839 **Assistant Financial Secretary**: Dawn Henry (610) 914-3218
Lawn Care: Pat Jeffers (717) 336-8170
Newsletter Editor: Office Staff (717) 336-8800
Offering Counters: Nancy Eberly (717) 945-2895
Scout Liaison: David Haldeman (717) 733-8551
Scripture Reader Coordinator: Anita Soto (717) 419-5520
Snow Removal: Andy Leonhard (717) 336-8800
Special Flowers: Pat Haller (717) 368-4975
Treasurer: Jon Hogan (814) 289-1646 **Assistant Treasurer**: Skip Hutchinson (717) 733-5029
Web Site Editor: Office Staff (717) 336-8800
Wedding Coordinator: Brittany Hartlove (717) 715-3127



SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

WEBSITE: www.mellingers.org

FACEBOOK: Check us out on Facebook. We are listed under Mellingers Evangelical Lutheran Church.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Discipleship In Life: TBD
Endowment/Memorial: Randy Brubaker (717) 733-9222
Personnel: Nancy Eberly (717) 945-2895
Property: Andy Leonhard (717) 336-8800
Social Ministry: Shirley Sweigart (717) 538-1946
Worship and Music: Nancy Hain (717) 336-6270
Youth Group Advisors: Kristi & Paul Leonhard (717) 733-1260 Cell: (717) 940-7535 Pastor Tim (717) 738 3838
SCOUT LEADERS
Troop 115: Sheldon Brubaker (717) 468-5333 smb115@ptd.net
Pack 115: Daniel Marszalek. (717)-405-9724 scoutleaderdan115@yahoo.com