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From the Pastor's Desk



Transitions are often jarring. Like many of you, my life is overfull at this time of year as we move from holiday to holiday. We have just paused to give thanks for the endless ways that God in Christ continues to bless our lives, and for the fact that Christ is the sole head of the church, our guide and our guardian.

There is much for us to be thankful for this year – as a faith community and as individuals. Mark and I prepare to move back into our home just in time to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the world once again. I wonder what you are celebrating and giving thanks for this year? I trust that you can share with me as I say, like my United Methodist friends: God is good... all the time! All the time... God is good!

On this note of anticipation for what is to come in my life, and in our shared faith journey, I look forward to the start of another church year with you. Yesterday, a bunch of us entered the church and decorated our sanctuary to set the stage for our Advent season. I hope you look around each week and soak in the wonders of the season. The greenery that anchors us in the natural world of creation, and the stars that symbolize the sparkling heavens above, especially the one star that appeared at Jesus' birth, guiding all to his side.

This year's Advent/Christmas journey is not just about the retelling of Jesus' birth story, it is about us learning to seek and find JOY in some of the most amazing, ordinary, and sometimes unexpected ways. I look forward to exploring each of those ways with you as we enter into the music of "Joy to the World," exploring how heaven and nature sing around us, drawing us deeper and deeper into the moments of awe and wonder, into moments of joy.

May your holiday season be new and joy-filled as the days and weeks unfold, leading us up to the amazing time we gather on Christmas Eve in celebration of Jesus' birth once again, amidst the twinkling of candles, the hush of the night, as we listen to heaven and nature singing to us once more.

Blessings and joy,
Pastor Brenda





HEAVEN AND NATURE SING

This year for our Advent/Christmas season we are trying something new for worship. We are utilizing a series from Dr. Marcia McFee's "Worship Design Studio," which creates a season experience for us. Our theme is Heaven and Nature Sing, taken right from the lyrics of "Joy to the World."

Each week **we will begin worship at 8:40am** with our Prayers of the People, and start our normal announcement time at 8:45am since our worship time for this season is filled with some exciting new features. Please plan to arrive by 8:40am each week so you can enjoy the full effect of our worship time together.

One of the new features is a special song that we use each week. We hope that this holiday season leads you to experience JOY in a new way.

Blessings and Peace,
Blymire's Worship Team

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Peggie Free will be leading a series on Heaven during our Sunday school on December 7 and December 14. There will be no Sunday school on December 14 and December 28.

We are looking for volunteers to lead classes in 2026. If interested, please sign up on the sheet on the table in the Gathering Room. Thank you.



WAYS TO BLESS OTHERS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



During the Christmas season, it is no surprise that people are notoriously more generous than any other time throughout the year. St. John's Blymire's has a history of deep generosity and providing a helping hand for our neighbors in need.

This year, we are continuing to collect non-perishable food for our Dallastown and Red Lion neighbors who need a little bit of extra food to help make their holidays a brighter place. We are also collecting money for the gift cards we hand out to families with children so that they have a little something under the tree on Christmas day. As we prepare the family holiday bags, we will need to replenish our shelves for the weeks to follow. Any little bit you can share is much appreciated and helps to put a warm meal in an empty belly and a smile upon someone's face.

Another opportunity we have this year to give is through something that Pastor Brenda calls "Mary's Baby Shower." We all know that it takes a lot of diapers, wipes, formula, clothing, blankets, and toys to care for a little one each day. This year, we are collecting items for our littlest neighbors in honor of Mary and baby Jesus. We are partnering with our sister congregation, Hayshire UCC, as we fill the manger to overflowing with all the things a little one needs to keep them healthy and happy every day. Each item collected will help ease a momma's heart as she strives to provide the best start in life for her little one. Each week, please add your items to our manger up front. We will celebrate the joy of our gifts as we bless them the Sunday after Christmas before they are donated to the Women and Children's shelter at LifePath Ministries in downtown York.

Thank you for your generous hearts and love as you joyfully share with others during this holiday season.

DECEMBER
BIRTHDAYS



*May God
Bless You on
Your
Birthday!*

- 2. Sundi Neuhaus
Judy Bishop
- 5. Natasha Brenner
- 6. Cindy Luckenbaugh
- 7. Jamie Klyeman
- 10. Kevin Myers
- 12. Carl Criswell
Jennifer Roelke
Katie Stoops
- 14. Jennifer Knickel
- 16. Lori Corso
- 17. Hannah Marshall
W. Edwin Bishop
- 18. Brett Innerst
Kortney Troop
- 19. Danielle Marshall
Zachery Luckenbaugh
- 22. Carol Barnhart
Callie Nugent

- 26. Thomas Miller
- 27. Donna Sleeth
Sylvia Kohler

CELEBRATING DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- Dec. 16 - Rod and Linda Eichelberger - 58 years
- Dec. 18 - Pastor Curt and Ginny Weber - 54 years
- Dec. 28 - Terry & Sharon Stein - 34 years

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Month-2025	Income	Expense			
January	\$7,763.00	\$10,980.79			
February	\$8,040.00	\$10,783.87			
March	\$11,744.00	\$16,632.22			
April	\$8,612.00	\$8,434.27			
May	\$11,583.00	\$13,079.42			
June	\$11,541.00	\$13,404.75			
July	\$9,360.00	\$11,104.65			
August	\$7,405.00	\$9,587.43			
September	\$9,301.90	\$12,834.83			
October	\$16,737.00	\$10,090.42			
November					
December					
Total	\$102,086.90	\$116,932.65			

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ November 1, 2025
(transferred \$7,195.00 from investments in September)

\$3899.59

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2025

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 542.38
January	4	\$ 225.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 398.38
February	3	\$ 175.00	\$ 87.00	\$ 310.38
March	2	\$ 100.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 320.38
April	4	\$ 200.00	\$ 92.92	\$ 213.30
May	2	\$ 75.00	\$ 84.21	\$ 222.51
June	2	\$ 225.00	\$ 143.19	\$ 140.70
July	0	\$ 0.00	\$ 91.81	\$ 232.51
August	0	\$ 0.00	\$ 177.00	\$ 409.51
September	5	\$ 250.00	\$ 86.00	\$ 245.51
October	4	\$ 175.00	\$ 186.65	\$ 257.16
November				
December				
Total	26	\$ 1425.00	\$ 1132.78	

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Terry & Fran Doll
Room 346
Residence @ Fitz Farm
2200 Springwood Rd.
York, PA 17403
Terry's cell (717) 968-2454
Fran's cell (717) 968-8754



Peggy Luckenbaugh
Room 710B
York View Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403



**Remember
and pray for
Our Members
in the
Military**

Tech Sergeant Brandon Ness
221 E. Catalpa Ct.
Derby, KS 67037

CARING AND SHARING FUND

Don't forget, we also have a basket on the Welcome Table for any donations you would like to give to the Dallastown Area School District's Caring and Sharing Fund to help needy students and their families.

In addition, you are encouraged to bring good, used clothing to Community Aid, tell them it's for DASD, and DASD will then get a certain amount of money per pound of clothing, to go toward the Caring and Sharing Fund. If you are unable to take the clothing directly to Community Aid, you can bring them to the church and put them in the bins in the Gathering Place.

Gift Cards

Would you like to help your church without spending any extra money? You can do this by buying gift cards to use for everyday purchases or as gifts. For every card sold we earn a profit from 1½% all the way to 16%, depending on the merchant. To get your cards, just fill out an order form (available on the table in the Gathering Room) and attach a check or cash. Checks should be made payable to St. John's Blymire's UCC. You may drop the orders in the offering plate or place them on Wanda's desk in the office. Payment must be included with your order. Orders will be sent in each Monday morning. You may pick up your gift cards from Sandy Innerst at church the following Sunday.

This is a great way to do your Christmas shopping!!



Thank you all so much for your gifts to Trent and Brea to help with medical expenses. They are grateful and overwhelmed by all of the gifts, prayers, cards, calls, etc. that have been given by this church family. God speaks through each of you. Love, Mike and Cindy Axe

Thanks to all members of St. John's Blymire's for your prayers and thoughts in my time of grief. It was all greatly appreciated. Thank you so much. Charlie Diehl

KNITTERS/CROCHETERS

We continue to collect donations of handmade scarves and blankets for Memorial White Rose Hospice. They are especially in need of items for men. If you would like to participate in this ongoing project, there is a box in the Gathering Room for you to put your donations.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Check out the tables in the Gathering Room and discover all kinds of goodies for yourself and gifts to give to others.

The Fun Team is selling cookbooks for \$18.00 each, as well as seasoning salt for \$7.00. Carol Barnhart is generously offering her handmade bead creations for a donation to the Fun Team.

Sandy Innerst is selling canned foods such as jams, jellies, salsa, applesauce, pickles, beets, etc. Check the price list next to the display. All monies will be used to help pay medical expenses for her nephew Trent.



MEN'S GROUP

The next Men's Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9th



at 7:00 PM at the church. This month is "Mystery Guest Month" as the group will be attempting to guess the speaker's occupation. The presenter will then do a great Murder Mystery program, so if you are into strange murders in York County, you don't want to miss this one. Remember everyone is invited to attend these programs.



CHRISTMAS PARTY

Please join us on Sunday, December 14, immediately after the worship service, for our annual Christmas party. The church will be supplying hamburger BBQ and soup, but you are asked to bring a dessert to share. We are also inviting you to bring a wrapped Christmas ornament to exchange. **As we did last year, we will be holding an ugly sweater contest, so get out those Christmas sweaters.**

SECRET PALS

Sandy Innerst and Cindy Innerst-Axe will be hosting a brunch on Saturday, January 10, at 10:00 AM at Sandy's home to reveal our 2025 Secret Pals. At that time, we will receive our Secret Pals for 2026.



If you are interested in participating in the Secret Pal program, please let Diana Myers know by December 20 so she can be prepared for us to pick a Secret Pal at the Reveal Brunch.

When you choose a Secret Pal, you give that person a gift each month. Place your gift with a card attached for your pal on the table in the Gathering Room. Gifts will be picked up there. Your gifts will appear there too. This is a fun way to get to know each other better as we go through the year. Sometimes people figure out during the year who is gifting them, but others remain secret for the entire year. Either way, it is a fun way to connect.

Please let Sandy or Cindy know by January 4 if you can join us for brunch.

What is Messy Church? It's church, but not as you know it! Messy Church is a form of Community Outreach for families, friends and neighbors. It involves creativity, celebration and hospitality! It's church for people of any age and at all stages of their faith journey. A meal will be provided.



Our next Messy Church gathering will be held **Friday, December 19, from 6:00-8:00 PM.** The theme will be "A Christmas Celebration." If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room or call the church office at (717) 244-0655. Both adults and children are welcome! There will be no Messy Church in January or February.



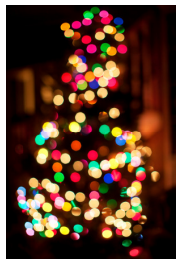
COOKIE WALK

This year's annual Cookie Walk will be held on Saturday, December 6, from 9:00 AM until noon (or sold out). Choose from a large selection of all types of homemade cookies. Buy as many as you like, mix and match flavors, all for just \$12.00 per pound.

In order for this to be a success we need lots of cookies, so get out your cookbooks, mixing bowls and cookie sheets. Cookies may be dropped off at the church that week from 8:00AM-11:00AM on Wednesday, 8:00AM-1:30PM on Thursday and Friday, also Friday evening 6:30-8:00PM. In addition to bakers, volunteers are also needed to help set up Friday evening and with the sales on Saturday morning. Questions, call Marti Leader at 717-858-6502.

Tree of Lights

As we did last year, we will be including a "Tree of Lights" as part of our service on Christmas Eve. You may sponsor a light in memory of or in honor of someone or just as a year end gift to help support our church.



You can use the sponsorship form on the next page of this newsletter or pick one up from the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room. Help us put lots of colored lights on our tree this year. Thank you very much.



**Tree Lighting Service
Christmas Eve, December 24, 11:00 PM
St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ
1009 Blymire Road
Dallastown, PA 17313**

Tree of Lights 2025

You may sponsor a light on the Christmas Tree:

In memory of a loved one

To honor a family member, mentor or friend

As a year end gift to our church

**Please Note! – In order to be listed on the Scroll of Honor in the Christmas Eve bulletin,
light sponsorships must be received by December 14th**

\$500 = Red Light

\$100 = Blue Light

\$ 50 = Green Light

\$ 25 = Gold Light

\$ 10 = White Light

(Sponsorship form on back)

Person giving the Light _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

TYPE OF GIFT:

IN HONOR OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

IN MEMORY OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

YEAR-END GIFT to St. John's Blymire's UCC _____

TYPE OF LIGHT: _____ \$500 Red Light
 _____ \$100 Blue Light
 _____ \$ 50 Green Light
 _____ \$ 25 Gold Light
 _____ \$ 10 White Light

Please drop your form and check in the offering plate or mail them to:

St. John's Blymire's UCC
1009 Blymire Rd.
Dallastown, PA 17313

In order to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin, forms must be received no later than December 14th

Questions? Please call the church office @ 717-244-0655



"It's sharing your gifts, not purchasing gifts;
It's not wrapping presents, it's being present
and wrapping your arms around the ones you love;
It's not getting Christmas cards out on time,
It's sending any card, anytime, at the right time;
It's not having the biggest and best Christmas light display,
It's displaying the Christ light that comes from your heart.



DECEMBER 2025

"If every single person who has liked you in your lifetime were to light up on a map, it would create the most glimmeringly beautiful network you could imagine.

Throw in the strangers you've been kind to, the people you've made laugh or inspired along the way and that bright network of YOU would be an impressive sight to behold.

You're so much more than you think you are. You've done so much more than you realize.

You're trailing a bright pathway that you don't even know about.
What a thing indeed."

Donna Asworth



NO ORDINARY NIGHT

Only one word describes the night Jesus came—*ordinary*.

No reason to expect a surprise. An ordinary night with ordinary sheep and ordinary shepherds. And were it not for a God who loves to hook an *extra* on the front of the ordinary, the night would have gone unnoticed.

But God dances amid the common. And that night he did a waltz. The black sky exploded with brightness. Trees that had been shadows jumped into clarity.

Sheep that had been silent became a chorus of curiosity. One minute the shepherd was dead asleep. The next he was rubbing his eyes and staring into the face of an angel who declared, "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord".

The night was ordinary no more. God had entered the world as a baby.

Max Lucado

Maybe the real happy ending is falling in love with the simplest parts of life. It's savoring that first sip of coffee in the morning, or losing yourself in the smell of freshly baked bread. It's driving down familiar roads with the windows down, letting the air mess up your hair while your favorite song fills the car. These moments — the ones that seem so ordinary — hold a kind of magic that fills the cracks we sometimes forget are there.

And maybe, just maybe, it's finding a piece of joy in small things we often take for granted. Like the laughter that comes out of nowhere, shared with a stranger in a grocery store aisle. Or the comfort of a cozy night at home, wrapped up in a blanket, watching a show you've seen a hundred times but still brings a smile to your face. It's these little things that pull us back to life, that remind us of just how blessed we are, not because everything is perfect but because we find beauty in what we already have.

MJ Blossoms



LOVE WAS
BORN IN A
STABLE

"Let my life be lived in gratitude, for every precious sunrise to every magical sunset, let me be thankful for what I have been privileged to experience. The cool air of heaven has touched my skin, the scent of its gardens has embraced me.
My life is a hymn of thanks."

Bishop Steven Charleston

"Stop disliking people for what you 'heard' about them, and be grateful that God doesn't dislike you for what He knows about you."

Unattributed



THIS LITTLE THING

When the angels left them, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place." - Luke 2:15

In human terms, this thing that took place in Bethlehem isn't much. A young couple had a baby. It happens every second on this spinning earth. Despite the angels' sky-exploding bombast, it's a little thing. And I wonder if the hastening shepherds might not have been a tad disappointed when they got there and found something so modest, like when you go see a show your friends have been gushing about, and you try to like it because, well, it's amazing, right? But it's sort of meh, and you're embarrassed that maybe you missed something, so you just tell them, yeah, yeah, it was great.

I wish sometimes that Luke hadn't decided to tell us the Christmas story like a gushy reviewer, because when we read about heavenly pyrotechnics marking key moments of grace, we could start expecting them in our own lives with God. Then, when not much happens, we might wonder what we missed. Probably nothing. It's just that when God works for our wellbeing, mostly it's by little things, small moves, a rustle of a single wing, not a flapping sky-full of them.

To set the world free for love, you have to start somewhere, somehow. It doesn't need to be in shock and awe. A wee gesture will do, something modest and small, and lo and behold, that wee thing is everything, alpha and omega in a nutshell, the whole thing in a little thing. Like the Little Thing we adore this blessed morn, God's slight initiative, a babe newborn and beautiful.

Prayer- *Thank you, God, for Jesus, born this happy morning—your gesture of love, your slight initiative, your little thing, our everything. Amen.*

Mary Luti

SNOWBALL

I made myself a snowball
As perfect as could be.
I thought I'd keep it as a pet
And let it sleep with me.
I made it some pajamas
And a pillow for its head.
Then last night it ran away,
But first it wet the bed.

Shel Silverstein



"Did I offer peace today?
Did I bring a smile to
someone's face?
Did I say words of healing?
Did I let go of my anger and
resentment?
Did I forgive?
Did I love?"
These are the real questions."
- Henri Nouwen

★ GOD'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO YOU ★

No matter what your faith is or is not, no matter where in the world you are, I want you to know that during this holiday season I'll be with you. In the eyes of every child and the melody of every song. I'll be the glimmer in the ice crystals, the rays in the sun, and the stars at night. And with each smile you see, every hug you receive, and every laugh you hear, I'll be there, reaching out through another, with blessings and tidings to last you the year. Not because it's Christmas, but because I love you, because I've always loved you, and because I always will. And because all of these things have been true, and will be true, every day of your life.

Unattributed



"Here's to the bridge-builders, the hand-holders, the light-bringers, those extraordinary souls wrapped in ordinary lives who quietly weave threads of humanity into an inhumane world. They are the unsung heroes in a world at war with itself. They are the whisperers of hope that peace is possible.

Look for them in this present darkness.

Light your candle with their flame. And then go. Build bridges. Hold hands. Bring light to a dark and desperate world. Be the hero you are looking for.

Peace is possible. It begins with us."

LR Knost



Christmas Card treasures



Turn old Christmas cards into beautiful keepsake ornaments! It's a fun, simple way to give new life to cards you've received and add a handmade touch to your tree.

What you need:

- Christmas cards
- Scissors
- Glue
- Circle pattern (cut from cardboard or trace around object)
- Hole punch
- Yarn or ribbon
- Glitter (optional)



What you do:

1. Trace a circle onto two Christmas cards.
2. Cut out the circles and glue the backs together.
3. Decorate the edges with glitter or ribbon for extra sparkle.
4. Punch a hole at the top and thread yarn or ribbon through to hang.



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.
— James 1:17 (NIV)

PUZZLE



GOOD NEWS TO THE SHEPHERDS

What did the angel of the Lord say to the shepherds?

Directions: Write the first letter of each picture on the lines.

“



”

Luke 2:11, NIV

Answer: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you." Luke 2:11, NIV