

Newsletter

Little Swatara Church of the Brethren

Office Phone (717)933-4723 Office Fax (717)933-9223

www.LittleSwatara.org

"Little Swatara is a Christ-centered Community of caring and serving people committed to peace and following Jesus Christ to: Grow Spiritually, Build Christian Community, and Share the Good News"

Worship Services 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.
Volume XLIX

Matthew S. Christ, Pastor
December, 2015

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Number 12

Celebrating the Reason for the Season

For to us a child is born to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9: 6

What if the angel never appeared to Mary and she never gave birth to the baby Jesus? How would our lives be different?

As we enter the Christmas season, it's easy to consume ourselves with family traditions and the culture's definition of Christmas and forget the true reason for the season. I'm not sure about you but I can't imagine my life without Jesus. Particularly at this time of year, we turn to God and are extremely thankful for the gift that has changed our lives forever.

Now I'll admit there have been gifts over the years that have caused me wide eyes and I've been in wonder over for months. But no gift has ever had the lasting impact Jesus has had. Often the gifts of the world let us down. They wear out. They simply don't last. Increasingly as the years go by we start to value the precious gift of God. We begin to take notice to what really matters. The hope we find in that baby takes our gloom and turns it into gladness.

It's so powerful to find the meaning in the gift that takes us from death to life. It's not a gift we can buy. Yet it's a gift we can give. And when the gift is received, it's not one to sit on the shelf or carry in your pocket, it's a gift that enters within. A gift we make a part of ourselves and pass on.

May we pause this day and consider where we'd be if that baby had never been born. How are our lives different? Are they different? May we celebrate the real reason for the season and offer the greatest gift ever given to the world. The gift of Jesus is all we truly need. Merry Christmas my friends and a transforming peace to you all.

Pastor Matt ☺

TEEN BIBLES PRESENTED NOVEMBER 22, 2015 TO THE FOLLOWING:

*Malachi Christ

*Gyselle Fidler

*Mai Hussmann

*Lydia Stupp



SERMON TOPICS – DECEMBER

November 29 – Unto us a promise is given – Luke 1:26-38

December 6 – Unto us a song is sung – Luke 1:46-55

December 13 – Unto us a way is made – Luke 1:68-80

December 20 – Unto us the greatest gift – Luke 2:1-20 (One Service)

December 28 – Guest Minister

SCHOLARSHIPS: The Berks County Community Foundation recently awarded scholarships to recent high school graduates. Those from Tulpehocken High are:

-**Aaron Riegel**, Bethel Township, \$4000 Kurr Scholarship to attend Elizabethtown College.

-**Alexis Yenser**, Tulpehocken Township \$5000 Kurr Scholarship to attend DeSales University.

CONGRATULATIONS STUDENTS!

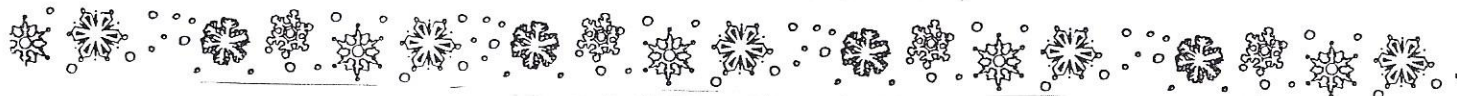
Members Birthdays for December:

Heather Strunk	4
Mark Myers	4
Curtis Phillipy	5
Caitlin Henning	6
JoLyn Light	6
Michelle Rebman	7
Linda Heisey	11
Todd Keeney	11
Debra Souders	11
Jonathan Reinhard	12
Isabel Ziegler	12
Richard A. Blatt	13
Debra Wengert	13
Carl Balsbaugh	14
Dolores Brandt	14
Sarah Wise	14



Michael Bashore	15
Marci Pickering	15
Malachi Christ	16
Lianne Fisher	17
Dorothy Renninger	17
Sallie Neuin	19
Melissa Dove	22
Kyle Dreibelbis	22
Sandra Strause	22
Andrea Showers	22
Patricia Timmins	22
Valerie Reed	23
Robert Donkel	23

Jesus of Nazareth	25
Matthew Blatt	26
Donna Krishak	26
Beryl Wanner	26
Barbara Smith	27
Fern Phillipy	27
Carol Sholl	28
Barbara Batz	29
James Mahaffey	29
Adele Stupp	29
Christopher Brubaker	30
James E. Frantz	30
Jamie Wilson	30
John High	31



STOCKINGS FOR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

George Bashore
Shirley Bashore
Mary Bashore
Rufus Bashore
Reta Frantz

Verna Gible
Linda Heisey
Randy Keeney
Martha Klahr
Jon Krueger

Joyce Luckenbill
Martha Patrick
Dorothy Renninger
Esther Yenser
Darrell Younker
Pastor Matt and family



Stockings are placed in the Narthex for Christmas Cards and may be put in the stockings until Sunday, December 13, 2015. Please remember these members with your Christmas wishes.

Any questions, contact Beryl Wanner 610-589-4870

CHRISTMAS MUSIC EVENTS

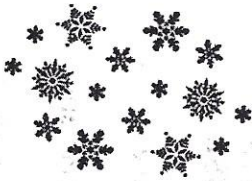
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Children's Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 13, during the Sunday School Hour at 9:30 a.m. at Little Swatara Church of the Brethren.



The children will present the musical, "Aaron the Allergic Shepherd" written by Ruth Elaine Schram and Mark Cabaniss. This is a journey about listening for God's plan for each of us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. The program involves pupils from Kindergarten through Grade 5.

This is a message for each of us, so you are all invited to attend and support the children, as well.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our Holiday Bazaar was a great success. We have had many compliments about it. We will continue to quilt and knot comforters over the winter. Help is always appreciated.

"As 2015 is coming to an end, I would like to thank all my committees for doing a wonderful job. We would like to thank everyone for supporting us throughout the year, for if you didn't give your help, we could not do the things we have done. A few things we accomplished were to give to the Building Fund, paid to polish the floors in the Fellowship Hall and accompanying areas, and paid for the tile in the Oak Room." - President, Beatrice Frantz.

On November 20, we had the Women's Brunch at Country Fare Restaurant, Myerstown, at which time we had a good turn-out and lots of fun!

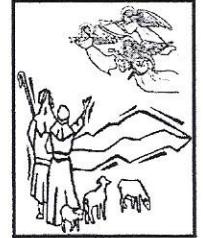
There will not be a Meeting in December and our next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. All women are invited.

We wish everyone a
MERRY CHRISTMAS and
A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

CHRISTMAS EVE PROGRAM

The Little Swatara Church of the Brethren Christmas Eve Worship begins at 7:00 p.m. December 24, 2015 in the Sanctuary. "The ABC's of Christmas" is the title of the evening program.

This year's service will be an interactive experience for all of the congregation from children through adults. We will remember the events leading to the birth of Jesus in the stable and its impact on each of our lives. During the service, events will be seen through the eyes of the Wise Men, Angels, and Shepherds.



The choirs will be adding their voices in song - (projection will help us focus). The congregation will take part in communion, candle lighting, and carol singing as we celebrate the birth of our Lord on this Holy Night so many years ago.

After the worship service, all are invited to the Fellowship Hall to socialize and enjoy refreshments. If you would like to donate home-made cookies for the evening, bring them to the kitchen on Christmas Eve before the service.

Thank You!



MUSIC AND WORSHIP TEAM CHILDREN'S BULLETINS

On the left side in the back of the sanctuary, before the pews, is a table that has children's bulletins for each Sunday. There are 2 different age groups - ages 3-6 and 7-12. They will try to follow the same message and scripture that Pastor Matt is using for that week. Please pick up one and encourage the children to use them.

Thank you and enjoy!



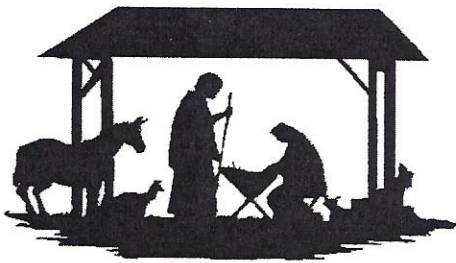
THE GATHERING PLACE

I heard it at the café...



There is excitement in the air as the holiday event schedule is under way. On Saturday, December 12, Santa is scheduled to visit the café as well as making gingerbread houses. The gingerbread houses are really a favorite and will have to be done after café hours as every available table will be needed.

Gingerbread House Decorating Children's Event Saturday, December 5 at noon at "The Gathering Place Cafe". Contact Sharon at 933-5248. Candy Decorations are needed. If you have Halloween candies leftover or hard candies, graham crackers, small cookies, cereal or any candies suitable for decorating a gingerbread house, please drop off at the café or at the church in a box marked by December 3. Thanks!



*May the birth of Jesus fill
you with love and peace
now and in the New Year!
Merry Christmas*

The "Newsletter" Staff:

Kathryn Ziegler, Editor

Lisa Gagliano, Publisher and Mailer

Sandra Manbeck, Mailer

Charlene Anspach, Secretary

VOLUNTEER REQUEST:

Needed: The Missions and Evangelism Worship Team is in need for a volunteer(s) to help change the sign in front of the church. If you would be willing to help for February, June and October, please contact Pat Timmins.

EVERY MEMBER COUNCIL MEETING RESPONSE

The November Council meeting agenda included the following items:

*Reports -3rd quarter financial – Gathering Place

*Call Slate members approved:

Moderator – Pamela Gerberich, 2016-18

Assistant Moderator – John Wise, 2016-18

Christian Ed – Sarah Bryant, 2016 -2018

Renee Brown, 2016-2018

Music/Worship – Dianne High, 2016-2018

Denise Christ, 2016-2018

Stewardship/Property – Donald Latimer, 2016-18

Jamie Wise, 2016-2018

Church Clerk – Denise Bohn, 2016-2018

Financial Secretary - Jean Myers, 2016-2018

Auditor – Gerald Bowman, 2016-2018

Annual Conference Delegates – Richard and

Michelle Yenser

District Conf.Delegate - Pauline Seiler, 2016-18

Area Council/Churches – Ralph Wanner,

2016-2018

Gifts Discernment – Pauline Seiler, 2016-2018

*Deacon Call -2016-2020

John, Dianne High

Ray, Sandra Keeney

Robert, Wendy Lingle

Pamela Gerberich

Gary, Mary Bashore

John, Jamie Wise

*Pastoral Support Package – Salary, \$58,042 plus Benefits

*2016 Budget approval - \$268,842.00

*First presentation of revised By-Laws reviewed

Next Every Member Council Meeting,

Feb 8, 2016



Little Swatara Preschool

December 2015



Dear Friends,

Hello and Merry Christmas! It is a wonderful time of year. We are getting ready for Christmas, and are excited about the approaching holiday. Christmas reminds us of the love God has for us through the birth of his son Jesus.

During the month of December, our teachers will focus on the events that surround the birth of Jesus as the reason for our celebration of Christmas. Our Preschool teachers will not present Santa Claus in class. If a child brings up the subject of Santa Claus, we simply say that some families like to credit Santa with gift giving. While at Preschool we will focus on the fact that Jesus is a gift for each of us from God, and we recognize his birth with Christmas celebrations. There are many fun activities planned for this Christmas season. We will be learning songs and actions rhymes that go with the season.

All classes will be reviewing academic skills learned this year through paper work and small group activities. Alphabet letters will not be introduced each week. Refer to classroom calendars for weekly Show & Tell categories.



Your children are very precious to us, and have blessed our lives. We are excited to share this special Christmas season with them. Remember to take time to let your child know just how special they are to you, enjoy Christmas together. Have a very happy holiday season and a blessed Christmas. "May your Christmas be a celebration of God's love."



Blessings to you, Miss Cindy

Thanksgiving Thank You

We send a hearty thank you to each family for making our Thanksgiving feasts wonderful learning experiences. We not only learned about team work, we also learned the basics of Thanksgiving. Everyone had lots of fun. Each child was able to help prepare the great tasting fruit salad. Our feasts had both Native American and Pilgrim children in attendance.



And, we had fun strutting around like turkeys and singing about the Mayflower, Indians, Pilgrims and giving thanks.

CHRISTMAS VACATION:

No classes will meet :

Wed, Dec.23 - no class

Thurs, Dec 24 -no class

Mon, Dec 28 -no class

Tues, Dec 29 -no class

Wed, Dec 30 -no class

Thurs, Dec 31.-no class



We will return to our regular class schedule beginning Monday, January 4, 2016. This will be our regular class schedule. Have a merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!



Foul Weather Closings:

In cases of bad weather, we will follow these guidelines: Preschool closings will follow Tulpehocken School District's policy for closing school due to bad weather. If Tulpehocken Elementary is :

-closed due to bad weather we will be closed.

-delayed we will run a modified session. The morning session will run 10 am—12 noon. The afternoon session will run 1-3pm. Extended days will run 10am-3pm.

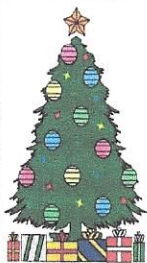
Bad weather delays and cancellations are broadcast in the following radio stations: WLBR 1270 AM Lebanon, WQIC 100.1 FM Lebanon, WRFY 102.5 FM Reading.

TV station: WGAL Channel 8 - Berks Cable 8, WFMZ Channel 69.

Christmas Gifts

We do not have an organized gift exchange with the children. If your child wishes to give a gift to a special friend from their class, please do so outside of class. This avoids the children not involved feeling left out.

Parents have been asking for gift ideas for the classrooms. Fisher Price Doodle Pros/ Magnadoodles, Small Lego Building Blocks, Magnet toys and children's books. Craft supplies are always appreciated. Wiggle eyes, play dough, **large** paint brushes, Glue sticks, washable paint, washable markers and construction paper. Thank you for thinking of your child's classroom as we give gifts at Christmas.



You Are Invited:

To attend Christmas Worship Services at Little Swatara Church. Sunday School is at 9:30 each week. Worship services at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.

Dec. 6 ~ 2nd Sunday of Advent 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. services

Dec. 13 ~ 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. services **Children's Christmas Program 9:30 a.m. "Aaron the Allergic Shepherd".**

Dec. 20 ~ 4th Sunday of Advent one service 10:30 a.m. services

Dec. 24 ~ **Christmas Eve Program 7:00 p.m. Is a kid friendly service titled "The A, B, C's of Christmas". All are WELCOME!**



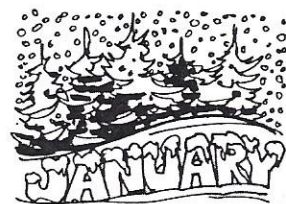
Thinking of Others

During the Christmas season each class will be collecting canned goods and nonperishable food items for the local Food Pantry. We do this to help the children experience the thoughtfulness of giving without receiving. The idea is to have your preschooler be allowed to choose or buy one or more items they enjoy eating to give to a family in need. The items may be chosen from the grocery shelf or from your cupboard. We have found that allowing the preschooler to choose the food item makes the giving extra special. The food items will be placed under the classroom tree, later packed into boxes by the children and given to the Bethel-Tulpehocken Food Pantry for distribution. Items may be brought into the classrooms anytime during the month of December.



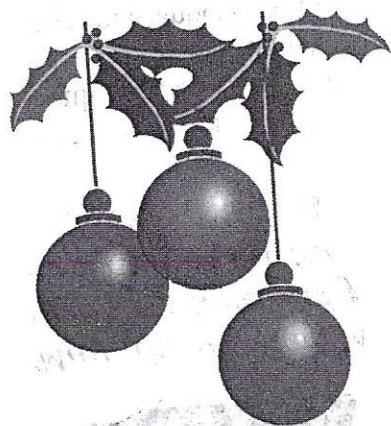


2015-2016 COMING EVENTS



- 1, NO Leadership meeting
- 3, 4pm Scouts meet
- 5, 12noon, Café, Children's Event
LVBH Nut Delivery
- 6, II ADVENT
 - 9:30am Youth Yummies
 - 6pm Café, Christian Poetry Fellowship
 - 6pm Pack Meeting
- 7, 8:30am-Ret 7pm, 50 Plus Bus Trip
- 8, 12:30-5pm, FH 50 Plus Meets
6:30pm Den Meeting
- 11, 3-8pm FH K RES. Women's Fellowship
- 12, 9am, Children's Christmas Program Practice
6pm, FH K RES. Farm Women #2
- 13, III ADVENT
 - 9:30am Children's Christmas Program
 - Food Pantry Collection
 - Mission Emphasis Sunday
- 15, 9a-2pm FH, K Res. Women's Fellowship
- 16, 7pm, LVBH Worship Service w/Pastor & Choir
- 18, 2-6pm Bethel Food Pantry
- 19, 12n-4pm FH, K Res. D.High
4:30pm FH, RES. W.Lingle
6pm Young Family Fellowship
- 20 IV ADVENT – ONE SERVICE, 10:30AM
WLBR Broadcast Sunday
Newsletter Deadline
6pm Café, JJJ Life Group Meets
- 22, 12:30-5pm FH, 50 Plus
End of Year Ministry Team Minutes Due
6:30pm Den Meeting
- 24, 7pm Christmas Eve Service
- 25, CHRISTMAS DAY
FH, K RES. S. Bashore
- 27, 8:15 & 10:30am Guest Speaker
- 31, New Years Eve

- 1, Happy New Year!
- 2, 1pm FH, 50 Plus Program
- 3, 6pm Café Christian Poetry Fellowship
6pm O, Scout Leader Meeting
- 5, 7pm FH, Leadership Team Meeting
- 6, EPIPHANY
- 7, 9am FH, Women's Business Meeting
6pm Café, Feeding Trough Bible Study
- 9, 2pm K Res. S. Bashore
- 10, Food Pantry Collection
Mission Emphasis Sunday "We Care Packages"
- 12, 12:30pm FH, 50 Plus Meets
6:30pm O, Den Meeting
- 14, 6pm Café, Feeding Trough Bible Study
- 15, 2pm Bethel Food Pantry
Wedding Rehearsal
15-17, Sr. High Youth District Winter Retreat
- 16, Wedding
6pm Young Family Fellowship
- 17, 6pm Café, JJJ Life Group Potluck
- 21, 9am Preschool Thirsty Thursday
6pm café, Feeding Trough Bible Study
23, 7am Myerstown Dutchway, Men's Fellowship Bible Study
- 24, 8:15 & 10:30am Anointing
Newsletter Deadline
- 26, Ministry Team Minutes Due
12:30pm FH, 50 Plus Meets
6:30pm O, Den Meeting
- 28, 9am Preschool Thirsty Thursdays
6pm Café Feeding Trough Bible Study
- 30, Deacon Retreat at Camp Swatara



EXERCISE CLASS
Meets every week
Monday and Wednesday
8:45-9:45 a.m.



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CHOIR REHEARSALS
WEDNESDAY
Jubilee- 7:00-7:30 pm
JOY – 7:30-8:00pm
Praise Team – 8:00-9:00 pm

THURSDAY
Senior 7:15 p.m.- 8:00 pm

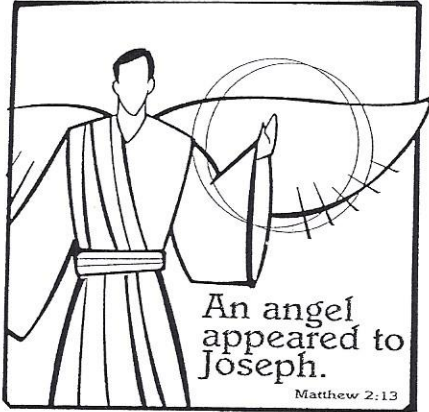
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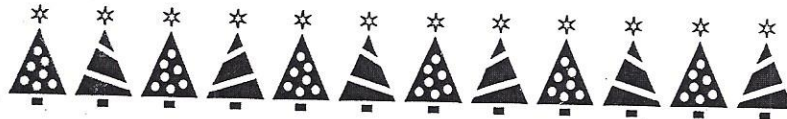
QUILTING AND COMFORTERS
Meet every week
Thursday, 8 a.m.



Little Swatara Church of the Brethren
31 Rehlersburg Road
P O Box 437
Bethel, PA 19507



DECEMBER 2015



THE THREE TREES

According to legend, three trees grew near Jesus' manger: an olive tree, a palm tree and a fig tree. The olive offered its fruit to the newborn King, and the palm tree gave its dates.

The poor fir, having nothing to give but worship, raised its boughs in adoration, and the angels hung stars on its branches. So the fir became the first Christmas tree.

-The Newsletter "Newsletter"



"Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it is in the heart of man."

-Anonymous