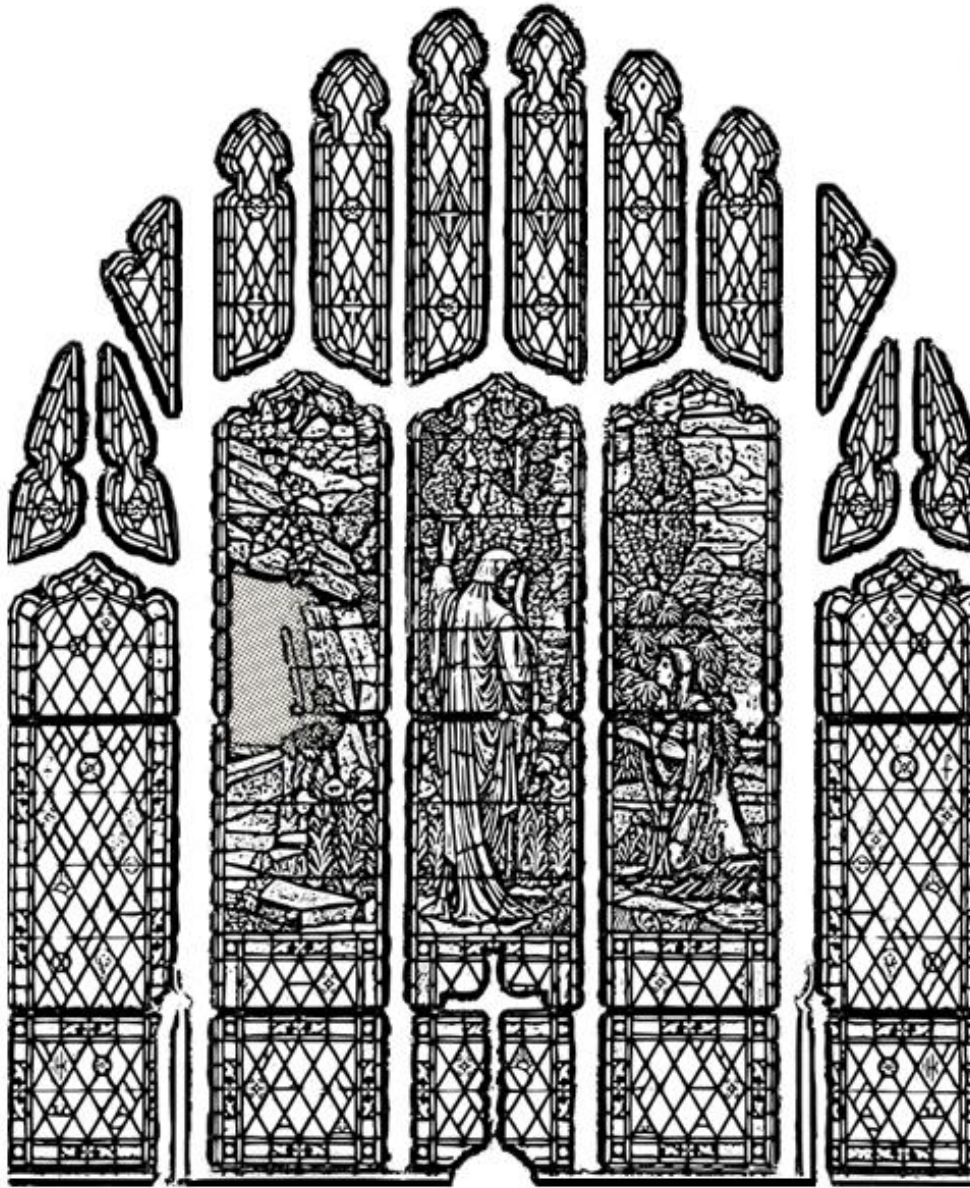


MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday, December 21, 2025, 8:30AM & 10:45AM

The Fourth Sunday of Advent & Nativity Tableaux

3319 WEST LIBERTY AVENUE ... PITTSBURGH, PA 15216 ... 412-531-7131

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, PASTOR ... tstrandburg@mlumc.org



Sunday, December 21, 2025 – Advent IV

What do you name a child who will "save his people from their sins?" When we come to Christ and give our lives to him, we receive a new name—Christian. There's much we can learn from the names Joseph, Mary, Jesus and Immanuel as we seek to live into that title.

**Indicates an invitation to stand in spirit or posture, as able.*

The Prelude

Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele

Paul Gerritz (1681-1728)

The Introit (10:45)

Keep your Lamps!

trad. spiritual, arr. A. Thomas

All rise, in body or spirit, at the sound of the chimes.

***Opening Hymn**

"O sing a song of Bethlehem"

UMH 179

*** The Greeting & Call to Worship**

℣ The Lord be with you.

℞ **And also with you.**

℣ God spoke through the prophet Isaiah,

℞ **"Comfort, O comfort, my people."**

℣ A voice cries out,

℞ **"Prepare the way of the Lord!"**

℣ Every valley will be lifted up, every mountain brought low, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed. All people shall witness this together,

℞ **For the mouth of God has spoken.**

℣ Come, O Come, Emmanuel;

℞ **We wait for You to enter our world and our lives in a new way.**

***Opening Prayer**

Said by all, with one voice.

Almighty God, the time of waiting is almost over.

Like new parents eagerly awaiting the birth of a child,

we impatiently wait with you for the birth of your Son.

We stand in awe, knowing what the birth of this particular baby means

for our lives yet unable to fully comprehend the depth of your love for us.

We come before you in worship this morning,

hoping that our thoughts, prayers and songs of praise are pleasing to you.

We pray in Jesus' name: Amen.

*** Silent Prayer & Response**

"Emmanuel"

UMH 204

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Liturgy

First Reader: Today, we come face to face with the scandalizing reality of Advent: Mary, the unwed mother; the Eternal Word growing in the womb of a mortal as a vulnerable baby; Joseph wrestling with the decision to leave his betrothed because of her pregnancy; God's call to Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace; and above all, God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand.

Congregation: With Mary and Joseph, we choose to await, to watch and listen for the way of Love, instead of responding to the world's judgment with fear and hardness of heart.

Second Reader: We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness, as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel: God with us.

As the first, second, third, and fourth candle are lit, all sing:

"Toda la Tierra"/"All earth is waiting" (v.1)

UMH 210

Sacrament of Baptism (10:45am)

UMH 39

NATHAN JAREC ROJAS BARNEQUE

THE PASTOR baptizes the child, after which the baptismal liturgy concludes with the following question posed to the congregation, and their ensuing response:

✠ Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life, and include this child now before you in your care?

✠ **With God's help, we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround Nathan with a community of love and forgiveness, that he may grow in his service to others. We will pray for him, that he may be a true disciple, who walks in the way that leads to life.**

¿ Se cuidarán mutuamente en la fe y la vida Cristiana e incluirán en su cuidado a esta persona que está ahora ante ustedes?

Con la ayuda de Dios, proclamaremos la buena nueva y viviremos según el ejemplo de Cristo. Rodearemos a Nathan de una comunidad de amor y perdón, para que crezca en su servicio a los demás. Oraremos por el, para que sea verdadero discípulo que anda por el camino que lleva a la vida.

Sung Response

"Jesús es mi Rey Soberano"/ (vv.1,3)

UMH 180

The people remain seated as they sing.

"O Jesus, my King and my Sovereign"

A Message for Young Disciples (10:45 am)

As the young disciples gather at the front of the church, all sing:

**This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.
Water, God's word, bread and cup, prayer and song: This is where children belong.**

The young disciples (school-age children) then depart the sanctuary for Kids Praise. Teachers will lead them back to the sanctuary prior to the conclusion of the service. Nursery is available for younger children; please see an usher for directions.

The First Lesson

A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Is. 7:10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

"Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Hymn**

"Ye who claim the faith of Jesus"

UMH 197

***The Second Lesson**

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

MT. 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Lector: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Said by all, with one voice.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.

The Sermon

“The Name Game”

Rev. Strandburg

*The Affirmation of Faith

UMH 882

All are invited to stand, in spirit or in posture, and to face the altar as the affirmation of faith is recited.

Pastor: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*The Sign of Peace

☩. The peace of Christ be with you.

✠. And also with you.

*The people are now invited to share signs of peace with their fellow members of Christ's body.
Extended conversation would ideally and most appropriately be reserved until the end of the service.*

Announcements

At the Offertory

The Offertory Hymn (8:30 am) **"Tell out, my soul"**

UMH 200

The Anthem (10:45 am) *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People* FREU DICH SEHR, O MEINE SEELE,
arr. J. Ferguson

***The Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

UMH 94

Nativity Tableaux (10:45am)

Hymn before the Tableaux **"Lo! How a rose e'er blooming"** (vv.1,3) **UMH 216**

The First Lesson *Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem* LK. 2:1-5

The First Carol **"To a maid engaged to Joseph"** (vv.1,2,6) **UMH 215**

The Second Lesson *Luke's Gospel tells of the birth of Jesus* LK. 2:6-7

The Second Carol **"Away in a manger"** (vv.1-2) **UMH 217**

The Third Lesson *The Angel Gabriel appears to the shepherds* LK. 2:8-12

The Third Carol **"Who is he in yonder stall?"** (vv.1,4,5) **UMH 190**

The Fourth Lesson *The Heavenly Host join Gabriel and praise God* LK. 2:13-14

The Fourth Carol **"Angels we have heard on high"** (vv.1,2) **UMH 238**

The Fifth Lesson The shepherds worship at the manger LK. 2:15-20

The Fifth Carol **"While shepherds watched their flocks by night"** (vv.1,3,4) **UMH 236**

The Sixth Lesson The Magi are led by the star to Jesus MT. 2:7-12

The Sixth Carol **"We three kings of orient are"** (vv.1,5) **UMH 254**

***Carol in Procession** **"Go, tell it on the mountain"** (vv.1,3) **UMH 251**

***Concluding Collect**

O God, you reveal the unfathomable glories of your great kingdom to us through one born as a little child. Grant that, as this wonderful story has once more been recounted for us by the youngest ones of our community, we may treasure and ponder its truth and its mystery in our hearts, and thus be ready to greet your Son with joy when at last he comes again.

Amen.

***The Sending Hymn** **"Lo! he comes with clouds descending"** **UMH 718**

***The Dismissal**

℣. Let us bless the Lord.

℟. Thanks be to God.

***The Benediction & Recessional**

The people remain in place until the altar party has retired.

The Postlude

*Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele:
Canonische Nachahmung in der Oktave*

Joh. Chr. Oley (1738-1789)

All are invited to a concert of organ music for the seasons of Advent and Christmas following the 10:45am worship service (music to begin at 12:15PM).

Prayer Concerns

Dennis Kelly, *cousin to Derick Florian, recovering from heart surgery and other health concerns.*

Mary Garber's Meals-on-Wheels driver's wife, undergoing heart surgery.

*The family and loved ones of **Leonard DeLuca**, father of Kevin DeLuca, who passed away earlier this month.*

Gary Henry, *undergoing cancer treatment.*

The Rev'd **Deborah Ackley-Killian**, *undergoing cancer treatment.*

Norma Buhrman, *enduring serious illness.*

For those serving their country or community as first responders or in the armed forces, especially:

SPC Russell Dale - CPT Shaun Hay - LTC Azizi Wesmiller - LTC Matthew Wesmiller

2LT Keith Cable - LTC Zachary Allen Finch - CPL Wyatt Hoover

*This week, we remember and pray for Christ's body throughout the world, especially remembering this week the church in **Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and China.** (Prayer Cycle of the World Council of Churches).*

Please remember the special concerns of those in our community and throughout our world in your personal prayer life throughout the week. If you wish to solicit prayers from the congregation for any matter (health, travel, special concerns, etc.), please contact the church office to have your concern added to the prayer list.

Participants in the Nativity Tableaux

Addison Alexander, MARY | Theodore Alexander, JOSEPH | Faith Carvender, ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

Andrea DeLuca, Asher Ward, Silas Ward, SHEPHERDS

Samantha Baker, Abby Purtill, Brody Kappeler, MAGI

Emma Purtill, Jude Florian, Jason Florian, Olivia Schmidt, Emily Schmidt, Nolan Knabb,

Kaleb Knabb, Trey Knabb, Agnes Alexander, Joachim Alexander, Gideon Alexander, ANGELS

GRATITUDE IS EXTENDED TO THE ADULT HELPERS WHO ASSISTED IN FACILITATING THE TABLEAUX

Leaders in Worship this Morning

LAURA WARD, CROSS BEARER

PETE & BETH SANTORE (8:30), AND ADDISON ALEXANDER, AGNES ALEXANDER,

SAMANTHA BAKER, AND EMMA PURTILL (10:45), ADVENT WREATH LITURGISTS

STACEY ROSLECK AND DAVID SEITZ, READERS FOR THE NATIVITY TABLEAUX

MR. STECKER (8:30) AND JOHN ESAIAS (10:45AM), LECTORS

THE CHOIR OF THE MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MR. A. MITCHELL V. STECKER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & LITURGY

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, SENIOR PASTOR
