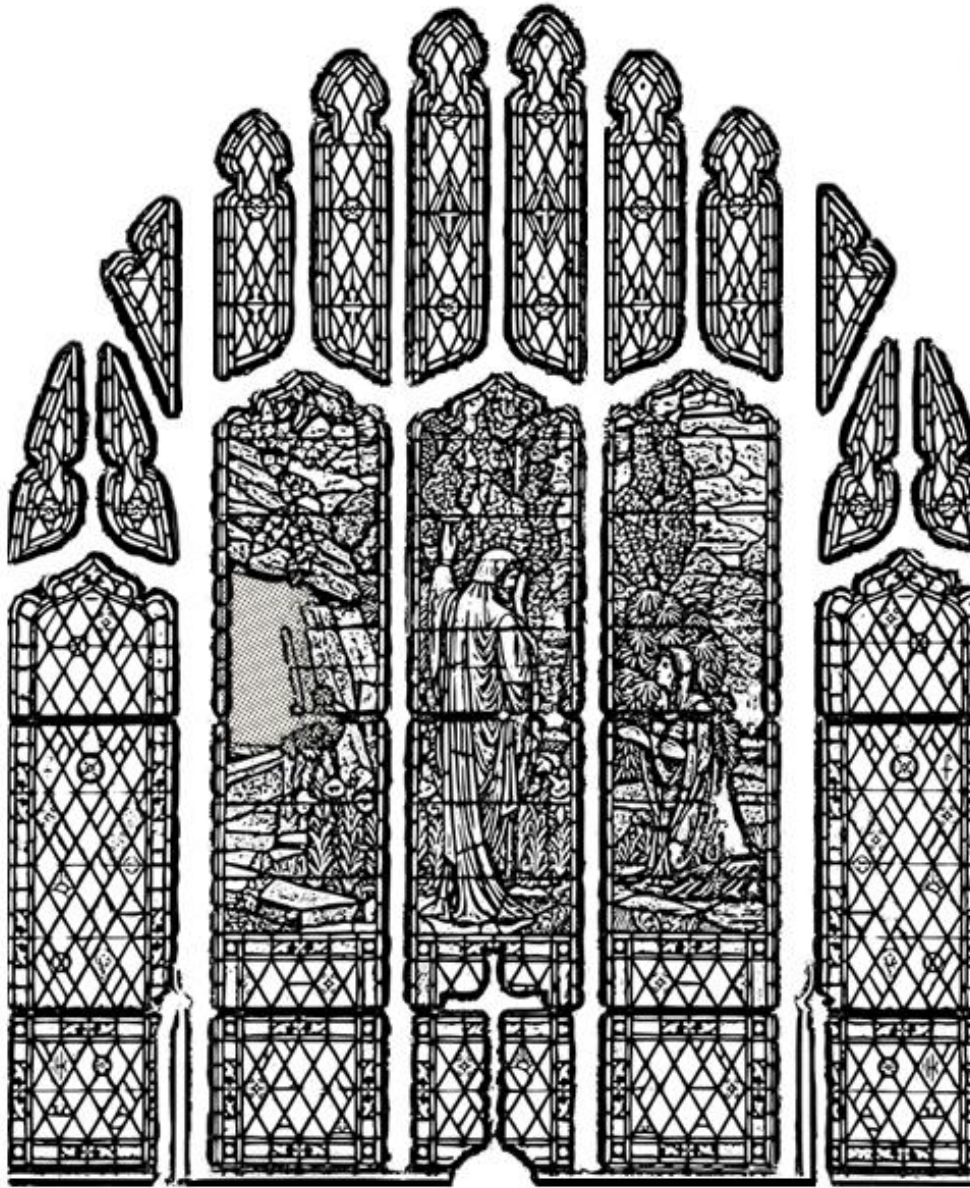


MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday, December 7, 2025, 8:30AM & 10:45AM

The Second Sunday of Advent

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

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



Sunday, December 7, 2025 – Advent II

Repent. Confess. Be baptized. Good things were happening through the ministry of John the Baptist along the Jordan River. Repentance is a hopeful word in any day. To proclaim repentance is to say that change is possible. A life headed off the road need not end at the bottom of the cliff, and a life at the bottom of the cliff need not remain there.

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

The Prelude

Creator of the Stars of Night

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, arr. Cathy Moklebust

Offered by Promise Bells

The Introit (10:45)

Matin Responsory

arr. from G.P. da Palestrina (1525-1594)

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Go ye out to meet him and say: Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

High and low, rich and poor, one with another.

Go ye out to meet him and say: Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep.

Tell us, art thou he that should come?

Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come to reign over thy people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth. Go ye out to meet him and say: Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

As the chimes sound following the introit, all rise, in either body or spirit, for the procession.

*Opening Hymn

"I want to be ready"

UMH 722

*The Greeting & Call to Worship

✠ The Lord be with you.

✠ And also with you.

✠ Prepare the way for the One who comes. Are you ready to repent and believe?

✠ We turn away from false idols and reorient our lives to the One who calls us by name.

✠ The call to discipleship carries with it costs: obedience, sacrifice, commitment.

✠ We accept the weight of the cross as we proclaim, "We will to will your will."

*Opening Prayer

Said by all, with one voice.

Holy One, who fashions the universe and creates all people,

weave praise and compassion into the fabric of our lives.

Let our hearts overflow with gratitude, always ready to sing, to pour out our praise.

Give us, also, hearts of compassion,

ready to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, care for the forgotten.

**Forgive us our reluctance to reach out a helping hand,
our rationalizations that mask our fears,
our excuses that pale in the face of suffering.
Cause us to hear Mary's song anew
and give us courage to add our songs of praise and deeds of justice. Amen.**

***Silent Prayer**

***Response**

"Creator of the stars of night"

UMH 692

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Liturgy

First Reader: Advent reminds us that we are a people who share the story of Jesus, who brings peace by judging in favor of the poor, and by ruling with equity for the meek of the earth. We long for the day when "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them". (Is. 11:6)

Congregation: Today, we choose to live the story of peace, knowing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God's creation.

Second Reader: We light this candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to bring Light to places the world seeks to hide, until that day when all creation lives together in harmony and abundance.

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

"All earth is waiting" (v.2)

UMH 210

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 (3 yr. - 3rd grade) then depart the sanctuary for Kids Praise.

Teachers will lead them back to the sanctuary prior to the conclusion of the service.

The First Lesson

A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Is. 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

***Hymn**

"There's a voice in the wilderness crying"

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a____
 2 O____ Zi - on, that bring - est good tid - ings, get thee
 3 but the word of our God en - du - reth, the____

call from the ways un - trod; Pre - pare in the des - ert a
 up to the heights and sing! Pro - claim to a des - o - late
 arm of the Lord is strong; he stands in the midst____ of

high - way, a high - way for our God! The____
 peo - ple the com - ing of their King. Like the
 na - tions, and he will right the wrong. He shall

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the
 flowers of the field they per - ish, like
 feed his flock like a shep - herd, the

lof - ty hills brought low; make straight all the crook - ed
 grass our works de - cay, the power and pomp of
 lambs he'll gent - ly hold; to pas - tures of peace he'll

pla - ces where the Lord our God may go!
 na - tions shall pass like a dream a - way;
 lead them, and bring them safe to his fold.

***The Second Lesson**

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

MT. 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

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

"I Will to Will God's Will"

Rev. Strandburg

***The Sign of Peace & Announcements**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

At the Offertory

The Offertory Hymn (8:30 am) “My Lord, what a morning”

UMH 719

The Anthem (10:45 am) *Prepare the way, O zion*

**BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN,
trad. Swedish melody**

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear.

Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.

Refrain: O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love. Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding. [Refrain]

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace, and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place. All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing. [Refrain]

***The Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

UMH 94

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

***The Great Thanksgiving**

This morning's communion setting is Setting E, found at UMH 24

✠ The Lord be with you.

✠ **And also with you.**

✠ Lift up your hearts.

✠ **We lift them up to the Lord.**

✠ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

✠ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

The pastor continues in prayer, and concludes with the following words:

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory: Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord:

Hosanna in the highest!

... as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died; Christ has risen; Christ will come again.

The pastor continues in prayer, and concludes with the following words:

... all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

Amen, amen, amen!

Giving of the Bread & Cup

Music at Communion (10:45) *Schmücke dich, O liebe seele* (BWV654) J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Hymn during Communion "Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness" UMH 612

Prayer following Communion

Father in heaven,
who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge:
give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that,
when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

According to the use of the Church of England

***The Sending Hymn** "Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates" UMH 213

***The Dismissal**

℣. Let us bless the Lord.

℟. Thanks be to God.

***The Benediction & Recessional**

The Postlude Finale: Toccata on the Gregorian Hymn "Conditor Alme Siderum" Pietro Yon (1886-1943)
(No. 5 from *Advent: First Religious Suite for Organ*)

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

Prayer Concerns

*The family and loved ones of **Leonard DeLuca**, father of Kevin DeLuca, who passed away last week.*

Gary Henry, undergoing cancer treatment.

Clark Remington, struggling with illness.

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 **Myanmar** and **Thailand**. (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.

Leaders in Worship this Morning

SILAS WARD AND DILLON SCHMIDT, ACOLYTES

DERICK FLORIAN, CROSS BEARER

ROB & JANE SPICHER (8:30) AND THE DeLUCA FAMILY (10:45),

LEADERS IN THE ADVENT WREATH LITURGY

JOETA D'ESTE (8:30AM) AND DONNA CHESLEIGH (10:45AM), LECTORS

THE HANDBELL CHOIRS OF THE MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,

MRS. NANCY LUTZ, DIRECTOR

THE CHOIR OF THE MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MS. BETHANY MINGLE, SOPRANO

MS. TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, MEZZO-SOPRANO

MRS. SARAH BOICE STECKER, ALTO

MR. KIRBY DILWORTH, TENOR

MR. A. MITCHELL V. STECKER, MINISTER OF MUSIC & ORGANIST

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, SENIOR PASTOR

*The altar flowers this morning given by
Joyce Magill
in loving memory of
Joe.*

*The flowers at the columbarium given by
the Kish and Gullborg Families
in loving memory of
Grace Gullborg.*

*For information about furnishing altar flowers for future services,
contact Lizzie Diller at 412-860-3614. The cost is \$45 per arrangement.*