

Bethany E-mail Updates—December 2018

Reflection from Pastor Ruth: ADVENT

December is the last month of the calendar year, but on our Church calendar December ushers in the time of Advent—beginning a new cycle of seasons.

On December 2 you will see blue paraments on the altar—blue: the color of hope. A wreath of greens with four candles stands in the chancel.

We are aware of the darkness in our world and in ourselves. The ceremony of lighting one candle each week shows us the coming of God's light into our lives. The living flame reminds us of the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and points also to His coming again at the end of the ages. As we hear the ancient prophecies, words of warning and of promise, we are put in touch with people who have gone before us and with generations who will follow after us. The scripture texts appointed for the season and the Advent hymns and prayers speak to our fears, our deepest needs, our longing for wholeness.

In these busy December days it is good to find a little time to be still...to ponder the mystery and receive the joy of our Lord's coming.

Pastor Ruth

Recent Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

Myra Ellen Rhoades November 4

Daughter of Kaitlin and Adam Rhoades

Janet Stowe is her proud Grandma; Barbara and Basil Stowe are her great grandparents!

Maeve Catharine Tropf November 11

Young adults, Maeve Tropf and her sister Hillary Voigt received the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Because Hillary attends Trinity UCC, the baptism was held outdoors in the yard between the two churches, with Pastor Phil Garrison and Pastor Ruth co-officiating.

Welcome to Myra and Maeve, our newest members of Bethany!

Thanks for the many gifts of Bethany

WELCA Thank Offering service:

This special service is held every year and is organized and presented by the Women of Bethany. Special readings, wonderful decorations, and focused music reflected the thanks that so many feel at this time of year for God's bountiful harvest and for the Holy Spirit's work within each and every participant. Many thanks again for all who contributed to this extraordinary service on November 18.

The special Congregational meeting scheduled for after the Thank Offering service determined that the Bethany Council could expend up to \$25,000 to renovate and update the kitchen, including plumbing and electrical to code. The amount for the update was donated with funds given to the Church from the Janis Stuart estate. Many thanks to the family and to those who worked on the kitchen committee.

Bethany Choir

Each Sunday our Bethany choir enhances our worship. They are scheduling three extra rehearsals to prepare for special anthems on Christmas Eve:

Wednesdays, December 5, 12, and 19 at 6:00 pm

They welcome new voices to join them!

Many thanks to our faithful choir, and to Ann McGinnis and Cliff Kelto who bring their music to us.

Bethany Quilters

On Tuesdays at 1:30 pm a group of Bethany women meet at Dolls and More in downtown Northport. Recently, they have made quilts to be given for the baptisms we've celebrated. Now they are working on gifts to be donated to the Northport School and have scheduled a card-making workshop for shut-ins and others on November 28 at 1:30 pm.

Looking Ahead

November 28, Wednesday at 1:30 pm: Card Making at Dolls & More with Sally Coohon and friends

December 2, Sunday at 2:00 pm: Advent wreath-making

Bob Lecy invites us to his workshop at 2:00 pm on Sunday afternoon. Greens will be provided.

Pastor Fred has handouts for you to use in your Advent devotions. There is a sign-up sheet in narthex.

December 9 Worship:

Hymn-sing during sermon part of the service. Enjoy singing and learning a little about several of your favorite carols.

December 16 Worship & Pot Luck:

Pastor Chrysanne Timm, Assistant to Bishop Satterlee will be with us.

Our annual Christmas potluck will follow worship.

December 23 Worship:

Fourth Sunday of Advent—We light our fourth candle, and hear the gospel story of Mary visiting Elizabeth. We celebrate with more favorite hymns.

December 24/Christmas Eve/ Nativity of Our Lord 10:00 pm

Plan to worship at our traditional service:

- ❖ Christmas gospel,
- ❖ Children's message,
- ❖ Special choir anthems
- ❖ Sacrament of Holy Communion
- ❖ Candle-lighting as we sing "Silent Night."

December 30 Worship:

First Sunday of Christmas—a chance to reflect on the year past and look to the year ahead.

Please join us for all of these special events.