

MECHANICSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
300 East Simpson Street • Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6596
717-697-0351 • www.mechpresby.org
December 10, 2017 • Second Sunday of Advent • 8:15 & 11am

Prepare the Way

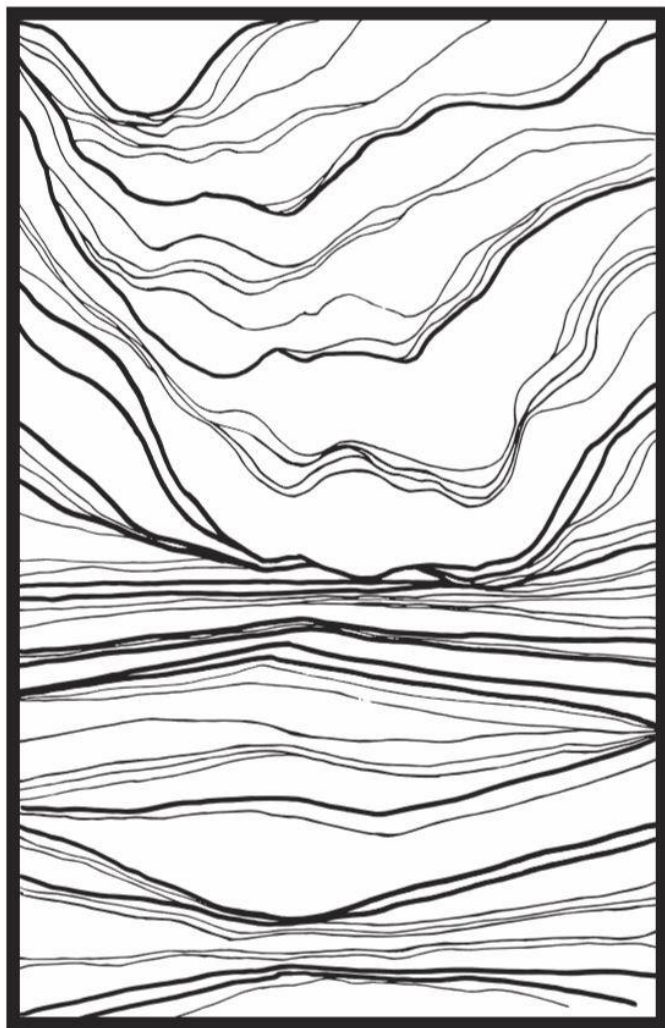
BY LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

inspired by Mark 1:1-8

“Prepare the way, make his paths straight”
(Mark 1:3)

I think that preparing the way, at a fundamental level, necessitates tangible and systemic change. There is surely personal work involved in these preparations, but the effort must be focused on practices, institutions, and communities as a whole. When I think about what this might mean for us now, I think it involves how we each play a role in shaping our policies, churches, families, and local communities. How can we play a part in shifting systems of power and scarcity to truly pave the way for the inbreaking of God to be truly known and shown?

In this piece, I created an open wilderness – the space in which this new beginning emerges. The sky swirls about, swallowed up by billowing clouds. The land converges with angled paths, but they and the sky gradually become straight along the horizon line. As you look at this image, my hope is that your eyes land on the straightened horizon. Perhaps this will remind us that our actions begin with sharing the vision of who is to come, to truly see possibility for all the crooked paths and twisted ways of our world to be made right. ~ LGG



Prelude

In Dulci Jubilo, (In Sweet Rejoicing)
Bells of Celebration

Traditional Carol, arr. Susan Rucker

Welcome & Concerns of the Church

During this time, please take a moment to sign the pew pad and pass it along the pew, taking note of the persons sitting with you so you can greet them warmly by name.

Centering Prayer

*Introit #88, vv. 3-4

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

*Call to Worship

Psalm 126:2

One: When can we dream,
If not in this season of Advent?

All: **When can we make room
In our hearts, in our worship, in our living,
For the possibility of something wildly and divinely new,
If not in Advent?**

One: The LORD has called *us* to dream
Of restoration for all people, of justice and relationship
Raining down in abundance so much that we laugh and sing together
And no one says, "See how they fight and rage; see how they crush
Their own brothers & sisters under the weight of inequity,"
But rather "See how the LORD lives through them."

All: **Rejoice always. Testify to the light.
Live God's imagination.**

*Hymn #347

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY

If you have a prayer request you would like to share with the pastors, please fill out a card from the pew rack and pass it to the center aisle where an usher will collect it during the first hymn. Please let us know of any changes.

*Conversation with God

Peace

One: "God," I whispered. "What if peace isn't possible? Then what?"
God was quiet for a minute. Then God wrapped me up in God's arms and told me a story.

All: "In the beginning, I knit you together. I wove strands of peace into your heart so that you might know and grow love; and your heart was beautiful, wild, and free. That was a long time ago, but peace is part of who you are. It just gets stuck under fear, doubt, and hurt—like a bird with stones on its wings."

One: "I don't understand," I fussed. "If peace is part of who we are, then why are we humans so bad at it?"
God held me a littler tighter, and said,

All: "Little bird, remember how loved you are, and start small. Remove the stones of anger, hurt, and fear one at a time and peace will surely grow."

One: Then God lifted up my arms and set me out to fly, and I realized that, grounded in God's love, I was beautiful and wild and free, and peace was a part of me. So I flew home, and stayed up all night writing love letters and tearing down walls so that the peace in me could fly to the peace in you.
Let me know when you get it... (time of silent reflection)

*Response #159, v.1

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

KINGSFOLD

*O Sing a Song of Bethlehem of shepherds watching there,
and of the news that came to them from angels in the air.
The light that shone on Bethlehem fills all the world today.
Of Jesus' birth and peace on earth the angels sing away.*

***The Passing of God's Love and Peace**

The Peace of Christ be with you... **And also with you.**

Children's Moment

We invite children to remain in worship. There is a nursery available for infants through 5 year olds.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Response #121, v. 4

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

Isaiah 40:1-11

O.T. p. 667

Anthem

I Wonder As I Wander

John Jacob Niles,

Bells of Celebration

arr. Karen Lakey Buckwalter

Second Lesson

Mark 1:1-8

N.T. p. 34

Sermon

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

Mark A. Allio



Sunday School Word of the Day: Repent

The children are encouraged to listen for the Sunday School Word of the Day.

***Hymn #140**

Once in Royal David's City

IRBY

***Declaration of Faith**

The Apostles' Creed

Our church states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ by using eleven creeds and confessions. In its earliest form the Apostles' Creed dates back to 180 AD. The word 'catholic' refers to the entire Christian church; 'quick' means living:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

debts/ debtors

Offering of Tithes & Gifts

11am worshippers: Please place the top sheet of the fellowship pads in the offering plates.

Offertory

Riu, Riu, Chiu

16th Century Spanish carol

The Bells of Celebration are joined by:

arr. Cathy Moglebust

Sue Briggs - cajon; Clarence Hodges - tambourine; Susan Miller - flute

Gary Weber - finger cymbals

***Response #144, v. 4**

In the Bleak Midwinter

CRANHAM

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what can I give him: give my heart.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn #119**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

***Charge & Benediction**

***Recessional** *Silent Night, Holy Night* Franz Gruber, arr. Arnold B. Sherman

***Postlude** *This Day There is Great Rejoicing* J. S. Bach, BWV 605
O hail this brightest day of days, All good Christian people!
For Christ hath come upon our ways, Ring it from the steeple!

*** Please greet one another in Christ's name ***

VISITORS: Welcome! Information about MPC can be found in the packets in the pews. If you are interested in additional information, please ask anyone around you or contact one of the pastors. Fair trade coffee and snacks are served after worship in the Gathering Area just outside the Sanctuary doors. This is also where you will find the restrooms, including baby changing stations. Children's worship kits are located in the back of the Sanctuary. Worship aids are available from the ushers. We're glad you're here!

The flowers are placed to the glory of God in memory of my mom, Florence Yawger, on her birthday, December 18th and in honor of Kelli, Jeremy and Emmy Fry, with birthdays on December 1st, 27th, and 29th respectively by Kim and Jim Parent; and by Larry and Shanon Lichty in honor of their daughter Lauren's fifth birthday. The yellow rose in the Sanctuary symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

A note of thanks: Special thanks to every member of MPC Bells of Celebration today and to the special musicians who joined us at the Offertory.

KNOWN TO BE HOSPITALIZED Joan Lotz – Messiah Village, Wagner 24

A time of personal prayer is offered following both services. If you would like to pray with a pastor and one of the officers of the church, please meet them by the prayer room near the pulpit following the worship service.

If you or a family member is hospitalized or in need of pastoral care, call **717-896-0131** at any time. It will connect you to the church office and one of the pastors.

TODAY – Youth Shop and Drop Fundraising:

DECEMBER 17 – *Tapestry of Light* – The Chancel Choir will present this cantata at both services.

DECEMBER 17 – *The Very First Christmas* – 3 PM – Children & Youth Christmas Pageant

DECEMBER 17 – Youth Group Christmas Party from 5 - 8 PM.

DECEMBER 21 – Longest Night Service – 7 PM

DECEMBER 24 – Advent 4 Morning Worship Service at 11:00 AM.

DECEMBER 24 – Christmas Eve Services – 5:30 PM, 7:30 & 11:30 PM

DECEMBER 25, 11 AM – Christmas Communion Worship

DECEMBER 31, 11 AM – Worship

Ministers.....	All members of the congregation
Senior Pastor/Head of Staff.....	Rev. Kathryn Z. Johnston.....kjohnton@mechpresby.org
Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adults	Rev. Mark A. Alliomallio@mechpresby.org
Director of Music	Mark McKeevermmckeever@mechpresby.org
Christian Education Director	Cathay Snyder.....csnyder@mechpresby.org
Playful Beginnings Director.....	Karen P. Taylorplayfulbeginnings.mpc@gmail.org
Mission Relations.....	www.pcusa.org/missionconnections
Find us online!	www.mechpresby.org • Twitter: @mechpresby • Facebook: Mechanicsburg Presbyterian Church

More People Caring

Participating in Worship:
Greeters: Taylor Eisenberger, Keni Melphis (8:15); Barbara Bell, Patti Hinkson, Jill Lepley (11:00)
Ushers: Kevin & Renée Breen, Sue Karakantas, Jim Hutchison (8:15); Ted & Gail Foor, Joyce Lackey, Kathie Carmines (11:00)
Readers: Jack Eger (8:15); Karen Vandrew (11:00)
Bells of Celebration Director: Eileen House
Liturgy: Rachel Hackenberg (CtW), Sanctified Art
Fellowship Hours: Tom & Lisa Pepper (8:15); Paula Logan (11:00)
Nursery: John & Joanne Neimer (8:15); Sunny Podolak, Riley Nelson, Danielle Martin (11:00)

2018 Offering Envelopes are available for you to pick up in Upper Fellowship Hall. If you can't find a box of envelopes with your name and would like them, please call/email the church office (717-697-0351).

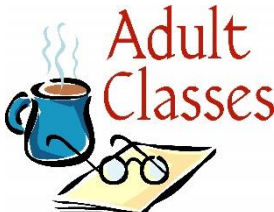


Today – Shop and Drop Fundraising: Parents of young children, you will be able to drop off your children with the youth of MPC! We will also be offering gift wrapping at the Youth Center! There will be two time slots from 2 – 4:30 PM and 5:30 – 8 PM. Cost is \$15 for one child and \$5 for each additional sibling. We will not be providing meals so please plan accordingly!

Dec. 17th – Youth Christmas Party, 5-8 PM – We will have our Gingerbread House Making Competition and our White Elephant Gift Exchange! Bring a gift of \$5 or less. Feel free to bring in items to decorate your Gingerbread house!

Questions or comments: contact Mark Allio
 (717-697-0351 or mallio@mechpresby.org)

WEEK OF DECEMBER 10 - 17, 2017		
SUN	8:15/11 AM	Newsletter Deadline
	9:35 AM	Worship
	2 & 5:30PM	Sunday School
		Youth Fundraiser
MON	9:30 AM	Playful Beginnings
	7 PM	Session
TUE	12 PM	Ecumenical Food Pantry
	6 PM	Peace & Justice Com., Panera
WED	7:45 PM	Chancel Choir
THU	10 AM	Playful Beginnings Program
	6:30 PM	B. S. Roundtable, FH
	7 PM	Untapped Conversations
FRI	6:15 AM	Men's Bible Fellowship
	6 PM	M'n M/PS Susq. Chorale
SUN	8:15/11 AM	Christmas Cantata
	9:35 AM	Sunday School
	3 PM	Christmas Pageant
	3 PM	Boy Scouts, LFH
	5 PM	Youth Christmas Party

- **Adult Topics** – (Upper Fellowship Hall) During this Advent season, join us in exploring how God speaks to us through Art. Utilizing artwork from A Sanctified Art's "Let There Be Color" Advent devotional and the work of other artists, we will reflect on the Advent theme and Lectionary readings and how the artwork may have been inspired by Scripture. Today is *Let there be...peace*. 
- **The Dave Petko Class** (Conf. Rm.) – Colossians
- **Joyful Hearts** (Parlor) is studying Acts

Christmas Eve Nursery, Greeter and Usher Sign-Up Lists: Nursery volunteers are needed for the 7:30 PM service and greeters and ushers are needed for all three services on Christmas Eve – 5:30, 7:30 and 11 PM. Please sign-up in the Gathering Area – thank you!

Giant Gift Cards –If you ordered Giant gift cards last week, you may pick them up this morning in the Gathering Area or in the office through the week.

A HUGE thank you to our MPC family and friends for your generosity and continued support of the Giving Tree Advent mission project. Warm winter coats, gloves, pajamas, an assortment of games, puzzles, and dolls, toiletries, and gift cards totaling 253 holiday gifts were delivered to Allison Hill Community Ministry, DELTA Housing, Stop the Violence, CROSS at Cumberland Vista, and Safe Harbour. The Mission Committee also funded Walmart gift cards for HELP as part of this project. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness of others to make their holiday season brighter and to the volunteers who offered their time.

Prison Ministries Card and Calendar Collection Update: A big thank you to everyone who donated cards and calendars for the Prison Ministries program recently. This week, we delivered 1785 Christmas cards, 800 greeting cards (i.e. birthday, get well, sympathy), and 350 calendars for 2018 to the State Correctional Institution chaplains. We will continue to collect these items throughout the year, so please put your donations in the bin in the Gathering Area anytime.



**IT'S NOT TOO LATE...
Pick Up Your
Advent Devotional
Today!!!**

Giving to Missions through Alternative Gift Christmas Shopping: A member of the Mission Committee will be in the Gathering Area today and December 17th after each service to help you with your Alternative Christmas Gift Shopping. You may honor a loved one by making a contribution to an organization that MPC supports through the Mission Committee. In return you will receive a simple ornament to present to your loved one.

The Penguins are Here! These stuffed creatures (and others), lovingly made by church members Loretta Smith and Margaret Mielke, will be given away in the church library in exchange for suggested donations to the Stop the Violence Ministry.



2018 Flower Calendar – The new calendar to sponsor 2018 chancel flowers is located on the bulletin board in the Breezeway. Two vases (\$15 each) need to be sponsored each week. To sponsor a vase, enter your name on the date of your choice.

Untapped Conversations will meet this Thursday at 7 PM at the Millworks in Harrisburg.

Mix 'n Mingle/Pep Set – The Susquehanna Chorale on Friday, December 15, 8 PM – two tickets remain for the show at Messiah College. Tickets are \$12.50. Contact Michael or Karen Zang (717-790-9103) if you would like to share in this enjoyable evening.

Substitutes Needed – Playful Beginnings would love to have a strong Substitute List to call on throughout the year. If interested, please contact Karen Taylor (717-697-4712) for details, or drop off your information in the black, preschool mail box. Include your name, phone number and days available. This is a paid position and clearances are required. It's a joy to spend time with our children!