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A Word from Pastor Scott

True And Lasting Peace

Season's greetings friends,

It can happen so quickly. We can start off our day, feeling utter joy and peace that we are in the center of God's will, and then bam! Life throws us a bunch of curveballs. We get distracted by the most minute details of our day and sometimes those interruptions are monumental. We can feel our life spiraling out of control, with the onslaught of negative news. A loved one was just admitted into the emergency room with breathing complications, your work is conducting a bunch of layoffs and you might be one of those on the chopping block, you received a unexpected bill in the mail which isn't covered by insurance, your relationship with your children or grandchildren has become stagnant, you are in way over your head with a project, you just spilled cranberry sauce on your new shirt, etc. A moment of rest and stillness before our Heavenly Father will do wonders for our spiritual life.

People of God, I have some good news for you, good news for all people! With all the errands we must do today, pertinent doctor appointments and unscheduled trips to the grocery store to pick up that desert for the Christmas party, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising

- CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Hope United Methodist Church

3474 Rothsville Road, Ephrata, PA 17522 (717) 738-3774

hopeumc@ptd.net ■ www.hopeumcephrata.org ■

www.facebook.com/hopeumcephrata

Worship 10 a.m. ■ Sunday School 11:15 a.m.

God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Lk. 2:11-14)

One scholar described this miraculous birth of our savior this way: "The mystery of the incarnation should always override our tendency to turn Jesus into a cuddly baby we can handle and control. He is Emmanuel—God with us—wrapped in human flesh. It is hard to wrap our minds around it, but it is true. He became flesh and dwelled among us." God being born in human form as that baby in the manger was created like us and understands the suffering, we endure every day. The creator of the universe, fully divine entered this world as Emmanuel—God with us. (Isa. 7:14) The mystery of the incarnation isn't something that we can control. That baby would one day grow up and be destined to save all humanity from their sins through dying on the cross and being resurrected on the third day. Peace has descended on the earth as God in human form in Jesus Christ, our Lord. We have been set free to live an abundant life, even eternal life with our God. Scholars claim that the Greek word used in Luke's gospel for peace is *eirēnē*, which is quite similar to the Hebrew word *shalom*. "It carries connotations of well-being, harmony and security.²

That sounds like some good news to me! Goodness, harmony and protection during the storms and joys of life. We are never alone. Our savior and Messiah Jesus Christ desires for us to dwell in a peace "which surpasses all understanding." (Phil. 4:7) The theologian John Piper describes our spiritual state and often limited understanding of peace in his sermon *A Savior Is Born*: "Our hearts and our minds are under assault. Guilt, worries, threats, confusions, uncertainties — they all threaten our peace. And Paul says that God wants to "guard" your hearts and minds. He guards them with his peace. He guards them in a way that goes beyond what human understanding can fathom. Don't limit the peace of God by what your understanding can see. He gives us inexplicable peace, supra-rational peace."

My friends of Hope, as we celebrate our Savior's birth and embark on a new year, let us take all our anxieties and distractions of life to the only one who can grant us true and lasting peace: Emmanuel, God with us always.

From my family to yours, Have a Merry Christmas, and Blessed New Year!

In Christ,

Pastor Scott

Stoll

thristnes

the Dorn Family
2023

¹ Ken Heer, <u>Luke: A Commentary for Bible Students</u> (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), 45.

² John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Lk 2:14.

³"A Savior Is Born: Glory to God, Peace to Man." *Desiring God*, 13 Nov. 2023, www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-savior-is-born-glory-to-god-peace-to-man

► Out and About:

Pastor Scott believes, "Opportunity is everywhere for true mission and evangelism." His faith and spirit guides him to get 'out and about' in the community. Each month we highlight some of his recent ministries.

Serving Lunch at City Gate - Ephrata











If you would like to suggest a future 'Out and About' segment for the Whisperings, contact Pastor Scott at (267) 467-4027 or email hopeumcpastorscott@gmail.com.

Hope UMC Staff and Office Hours

Pastor: Rev. Scott Dorn

Administrative Assistant: Laura Luciano

Director of Music: Lisa Helock ■ Organist: Dave Luck ■ Sexton: Doreen Deamer

Tuesday - Friday ■ 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

► SERMON SERIES: "SEEING AND EXPERIENCING GOD'S WORK"

December 3	Part 1 - First Sunday of Advent - Hope
	Game Changer (Isaiah 64:1-9)
December 10	Part 2 - Second Sunday of Advent - Peace
	Comfort, not Comfortable (Isaiah 40:1-11)
December 17	Part 3 - Third Sunday of Advent - Joy
	The Messiah's Mission Statement (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11)
	Part 4 - Fourth Sunday of Avent - Love Christmas Eve Sunday Worship (No Sermon) (Isaiah 9:2-7)
December 24	Part 5 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Christ
	Make Room For The Light (Luke 2:1-20)
December 31	Part 6 - New Year's Eve Sunday Worship (No Sermon)
	(Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40)

► SERMON SERIES: "COMMUNITY BUILDING: THE ESSENTIALS"

January 7 Part 1 - What Is Your Motivation? (Matthew 2:1-12, Ephesians 3:1-12)
January 14 Part 2 - Free To Say "No" (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)
January 21 Part 3 - Same God, Same Jesus, Different Presentation
(1 Corinthians 7:29-31)
January 28 Part 4 - Making The Journey Smooth (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)
February 4 Part 5 - It Is A Family Thing (1 Corinthians 9:16-23)
February 11Part 6 - The Struggle is Real (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

Office Notes

Office Closed - December 25 and January 1

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

FOR A USEFUL CALENDAR

Please fill out the yellow forms on the Administrative Assistant's desk to schedule meetings.

UPDATES

Please inform the church office whenever you set your next meeting date or select your next book or topic for your Sunday school or study. Thank you!

DEADLINES

Please submit all items for the bulletin by **12 p.m. Thursdays** and by the **15th of the month** for the next Whisperings.

FLOWERS & BULLETINS

Contact Sandy Muckle if you want to sponsor altar flowers less than a week in advance.

You may share an altar flower order with a friend, so that each person keeps one bouquet of flowers after the service and the total price still equals \$50. Two dedications may go in the bulletin.

Sponsor Flowers - \$50.00 **Sponsor Bulletins** - \$10.00

Available: December 3 and 10 Available: December 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31

Available: January 7, 14, 21 and 28 Available: January 7, 14, 21 and 28

CAN WE HELP?

For financial assistance, please contact Don Miller at (610) 858-9958

Updates to the Directory

Leonard & Holly Fake

223-244-9354 (new cell number)

Dorothy Romig (new address)

Ephrata Manor 99 Bethany Road, Room 129A Ephrata, PA 17522

Polly Spangler (new address)

Fairmount Homes 333 Wheat Ridge Drive, Room 225 Ephrata, PA 17522

Please notify the office of any changes to your contact information.

Meetings and News

December/January Dates

- 2 Hanging of the Greens
- 3 First Sunday of Advent Hope
- 10 Second Sunday of Advent Peace Staff Gifts Deadline
- 12 Sustainability Pathways Class
- 15 Newsletter Deadline
- 17 Third Sunday of Advent Joy
 Fellowship Sunday
 Giving Tree Deadline
 Christmas Cards for Homebound Deadline
- 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent Love Christmas Eve Service 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- 25 Merry Christmas
- 31 New Year's Eve
 Fifth Sunday Giving for Homes of Hope
- 1 Happy New Year
- 6 Epiphany of the Lord
- 7 Baptism of the Lord Sunday
- 14 Second Sunday after the Epiphany
- 21 Third Sunday after the Epiphany
- 28 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Weekly Events

Bells of Hope

Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Sanctuary

Senior Choir

Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m.
Choir Room

Monday Night Bible Study

Mondays at 7 p.m.
Conference Room
(Room 226)

Women's Book & Bible Study

Thursdays at 10 a.m.
Room 221

Men of Hope

Fellowship Hall
(First Friday of each month is at Gus's restaurant.)

Church Administration Meetings

Fellowship Sunday

(the 3rd Sunday each month)
Bring your favorite sweets and snacks to share after Sunday
Worship.

All meetings are at 6:30 p.m. unless specified.

Trustees Meeting - Monday, December 4
Visionary Team Meeting - Thursday, December 7 at 6 p.m.
WPCM Meeting, Monday, December 11
SPRC Meeting - Tuesday, December 19
Finance Meeting - Tuesday, January 9 at 7 p.m.
Staff Meeting - Sunday, January 21 at 11:30 a.m.
Worship Planning Meeting - Thursday, January 25

Meetings and News



The donation jar is in the Sanctuary. Our November 26 total was \$1,223.75. Thank you!

October 5th Sunday Giving

We collected \$40.00 for Water Street **Missions**.
Thank you!

Offering Envelopes

Envelopes will only be available in the basket in the Sanctuary. Please remember to identify your giving by writing your name on the envelope. Thank you! Using envelopes is a big help for our Financial Secretary, Amy Trella. Thank You!

Praise and Prayer Cards

Praise and prayer cards will only be available in the basket in the Sanctuary. Thank you!

Sustainability Pathway Class

Tuesday, December 12 at 5:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Guest Speaker - Rev. Steve Morton

Direct any questions to Pastor Scott or Bruce Tucker.

Homes of Hope

Homes of Hope (Ephrata) has helped families for housing and financially since 2011. Several churches are represented on this committee including Hope Church. Families are screened, accepted into the program and then assigned mentors to advise them with their monies and how to succeed. They must have jobs, their children must attend school and there is an assigned length of time to finish the program. Right now Homes of Hope has 2 apartments that are full. Our giving on December 31 will help people to succeed in this Homes of Hope.

Fifth Collection Sunday

We will collect for Homes of Hope on December 31.



The **Giving Tree** is up and the food and gifts will be due on Sunday, **December 17** and expected to be delivered by Wednesday, **December 20**.

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Saturday, December 2 - 2-4 p.m.



Christmas Card Recipients - bags will be in the lobby on Sunday, December 3 to collect your cards for our church family who are or may be homebound at times. All cards are due on Sunday, December 17.

Good Samaritan

Please place your donations in the basket underneath the visitor table in the lobby. Thank you!

Nativity Displays - If you have a nativity display you would like to share, please bring it in and place it on a sanctuary window sill or in the lobby for the Advent/ Christmas season. All displays will need to be up for the first Sunday of Advent on December 3.

► Ephrata Area Social Services Needs:

Spaghetti sauce, pasta noodles, gluten free items, beef stew, spam, syrup, sugar-free syrup, jelly, peanut butter, oatmeal, canned veggies They have plenty of green beans, tuna, and spaghetti noodles.

Please place your donations under the coat rack in the lobby. Thank you for your continued support of EASS and the work they do for our local community.

Adult Sunday Schools & Studies

Seekers - Bruce Tucker

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

The Parables of Jesus by Matt Williams

Jesus communicated deep spiritual truths through simple, vivid, and engaging stories. Woven from the stuff of everyday life, the parables of Jesus made the kingdom of God understandable and accessible to his listeners. In six engaging, interactive small group sessions, this Deeper Connections DVD will give you new insights into his parables and their meanings that will help you to appreciate more fully their relevance for your own life.



Wide Awake - Ron Lindberg

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in Room 221

On This Holy Night by Max Lucado, Rick Warren, David Jeremiah, John Maxwell, Jack Hayford and Bill Hybels

Six beloved Christian authors — Max Lucado, John Maxwell, Jack Hayford, Bill Hybels, David Jeremiah, and Rick Warren — share from a unique perspective and help you hear afresh the message God wants to whisper to your heart during this holiday. God loves you. God is with you. God is in every detail of your life. The message of Christmas is the message of eternity.



The Way (a name given to the earliest followers/disciples of Jesus) - Rev. Kevin Readman

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in the Conference Room (Room 226)

Exploring The Book of Psalms

October 22 to December 17

We are looking at Psalms as a devotional resource as it was used historically and in the present. Psalms is in large part a combination hymnal and prayer book.

Everyone is invited and welcome to participate in the study whatever weeks you are able to attend.

An outline of the weekly topics will be available on a table in the lobby or by contacting Kevin Readman at 717-203-8452 or kevin readman@yahoo.com.



The Redemption of Scrooge by Matt Rawle January 7 to February 11

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is a beloved and meaningful part of the holiday season. Matt Rawle will help us look at the story and how it encourages us to live a life of faithfulness to Jesus' calling and teaching.

"The Way" Sunday School class will be reflecting on Dickens' timeless story during the Epiphany season as we seek to grow in our response to God's work in our lives. And we have a chance to extend the Christmas Season into the New Year.

In case you need a reason or excuse to watch numerous versions of "A Christmas Carol" this holiday season, preparing for this conversation gives you just the purpose needed.

All are invited and welcome to participate in this conversation.

There is a book which is not required to participate.

If you would like a copy of the book or to ask questions please speak to Kevin Readman in person, call 717-203-8452 or email kevin readman@yahoo.com.



Monday Night Bible Study - Bruce Tucker

Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Conference Room (Room 226)

The Book of Luke

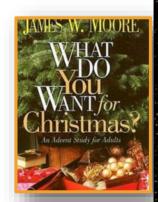
Women's Book & Bible Study - Sandy Schmid

Thursdays at 10 a.m. in Room 221

What Do You Want for Christmas? by James W. Moore

November 30 to December 28

This four-week study, for group or individual use, provides an introduction and an informative lesson for use through each successive week of Advent. Each lesson includes a reference to a key passage of Scripture, a personal reflection, study or discussion questions, a brief prayer, and a focus for the coming week. Take this opportunity to gain a clearer picture of the salvific work of Christ this Advent!



Studying The Book of Romans by Gib Martin starting on January 18.



Men of Hope Book & Bible Study

Fridays at 7:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

(First Friday of each month is at Gus's restaurant)



▶ Hope Preschool Prattle

It has been a very busy time at Hope Preschool!

We started November with a visit from the Akron Fire Company. They taught our students all about fire prevention and showed them the inside of the firetruck. One of the firefighters was a Hope Preschool alumni from 20 years ago and it was fun to have him return. We also had a visit from Lancaster County Parks and Recreation. They taught our Pre-K classes all about Nocturnal Animals as they discussed which animals are awake at night and which are awake during the day. Did you know that daytime animals are called Diurnal? I know a lot of 4-year-olds that now know that! There have been lots of leaf hunts around the church property to use in their fall projects. There were leaf piles made for jumping, leaf hair for self-portraits and leaves made into animals. There were also turkeys all around as the children prepared for Thanksgiving.

New equipment was added to the playground which was purchased with some of the funds from our Sub Sale. The children are really enjoying the playground as long as the weather allows! Thank you to everyone who supported us!

Christmas is right around the corner and December promises to be even busier than November. Preschool will host a family event on December 4th where the parents will come in for a craft, storytime and parent information center, hosted by Jeanette Pitman, where they will be able to learn the importance of and different ways, they can help their little learners master their fine motor skills. Storytime will be presented by Alfred Pitman, author of Ellie's Diary: A Day of Giving. (available on Amazon) Alfred is a member of Hope and his daughter Ellie attends the preschool, along with her brother Noah.

December will zip right by as it is a shorter month with the Christmas break. On December 19th and 20th all of the classes will

participate in a Christmas rotation where the preschool parents will help them with a craft, a snack, games and a story time. We are also working on a schoolwide Community Service Project. Our Pre-K/Preschool assistant, Sam Reedy's nephew Braxton recently had brain surgery and has had some complications that landed him back in the hospital. The medical bills are piling up and we are collecting donations to help offset the costs of travel, food and bills. If you feel drawn to donate, cash and checks can be dropped in the preschool mailbox in the church office or in the preschool office. Please make checks out to Hope Preschool.

We hope everyone has a blessed holiday season and from the children and staff of Hope Preschool, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Mrs. B



Preschool Pictures









Preschool Pictures









Preschool Trunk or Treat Pictures









Preschool Trunk or Treat Pictures



December Birthdays • • •

2 Donna Fetzer 12 Evie Kline 27 Harper Leigh Gorsuch

3 Terry Seidel Kyle Lindberg Brynn Voshell Card Shower

6 Clyde McMillan-Gamber 13 Brad Frisbie 30 Sissy Vierling

7 Eric Trella 14 Lauren Overly

11 Jill Curley 18 Jennifer Jefferson

Lorraine Wert | Card Shower | Rachel Weidman

January Birthdays •••

3 Tony Luciano 17 Amy Chebib 29 Derek Hachkowski

6 Eleanor Drybread Kenny Heiser Tony Hachkowski

7 Meghan Beamesderfer 18 Deb Kanuck Tony Luciano

8 Ryan Trella 19 Cindy Landes 30 Kara Plastino

26 Janice Book 31 Brooke Overly

Kathy Weinhold

Early February Birthdays ...

Card Shower

Jean Styer

2 Brent Smith

15 Joan Strosser

6 Jodi Seifert

8 Dave Spoo

12 Tom Bear

February Wedding Anniversaries • • •

Jack & Doris Smith will celebrate their 33rd anniversary on February 1.



CITY GATE

Join us as we thank our volunteers and those who contribute to the ministry of City Gate. It's also our one fundraiser of the year with a silent auction and the matching fund. The silent auction begins at 6:00 pm and there will be three auction sections.

Auction ends at 8:30 pm. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served beginning at 6:00 pm. We will be sharing about the ministries at each City Gate location. The Gala will be held at DOVE Westgate Church, 1755 W. Main Street, Ephrata. See invitation below. You can RSVP by scanning the QR code on the invitation. Hope to see all of you there!



► City Gate Needs:

Individually wrapped snacks like granola bars, cookies and chips. Kitchen sized garbage bags and paper towels. For the upcoming winter months we need new waterproof gloves for men and women, hand and foot warmers and socks for women that will fit in a shoe - not fluffy slipper socks They have plenty of hats, men's socks and blankets.

Red junipers and arborvitae, also known as northern white cedars, are evergreen trees that appear similar, but are not closely related. However, they do have characteristics in common. Both have attractive, green needles the year around, are handsomely columnar-shaped and especially decorative when snow piles on them. They are long-lived, provide food and shelter for wildlife the year around and create windbreaks when planted in rows.

Several kinds of small birds shelter in those coniferous trees through winter, adding their beauties and intrigues to those **of** the trees. Some of those birds are mourning doves, dark-eyed juncos and American robins. And chipping sparrows, house finches and purple grackles are some of the feathered critters that nest in them.

Mistakenly called red cedars, red junipers are in the juniper genus. They are native to the eastern half of the United States. They are most common, and visible, along roadsides and in abandoned fields, including here in Lancaster County. Patches and strips of red junipers inhabit the edges of Route 222 between Ephrata and Reading.

A pioneer species, red junipers colonize burned-over woods, deserted fields and disturbed roadsides. And they thrive well on poor soil, but need ample sunlight. They get plentiful sunshine by adapting to poor soil where few other kinds of trees can grow and shade them.

Red junipers have short, sharp needles. And they produce quarter-inch, berry-like cones that are dark blue, covered by a thin coating of white wax. Masses of those tiny cones are decorative among junipers' green needles in winter. Each pretty cone, with barely visible scales, has one to three seeds. Berry-eating rodents and birds ingest juniper cones, digest their pulp, but the birds pass the seeds far and wide across the country-side, causing the spread of red junipers.

Northern white cedars really are cedars that traditionally inhabit moist woods and lake shores in southeastern Canada and the northeastern United States. But, being adaptable, they are abundantly planted on many lawns for their beauties, including here in Lancaster County.

Cedars have fan-like limbs and flat sprays of scale-like foliage. They also produce half-inch, yellow-green cones by late June. Those small, decorative cones ripen to cinnamon-brown by late summer. Their scales open in fall, and their eight, quarter-inch, winged seeds per cone fall out and blow away on the wind. Rodents, sparrows, finches and other kinds of birds consume many of those seeds. But some of them sprout into new trees.

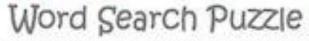
Red junipers and arborvitae are lovely, well-shaped trees. Junipers grow wild locally, but the cedars are planted on lawns because of their beauties. And, together, these handsome trees provide food and shelter for wildlife through each year, which add their intrigues to those of these coniferous trees.





Check out Clyde's nature blog: NaturesWondersByClyde.blogspot.com. Each short story is like taking a walk with your very own park naturalist!

CHRISTMAS







CANDY CANE
CARDS
CAROLERS
CHIMNEY
COOKIES
DECEMBER
ELVES
GARLAND

GIFTS
HOLLY
LIGHTS
MANGER
MISTLETOE
ORNAMENTS
PRESENTS
REINDEER

RUDOLPH SANTA SLEIGH SNOWMAN STOCKING TINSEL TREE WREATH