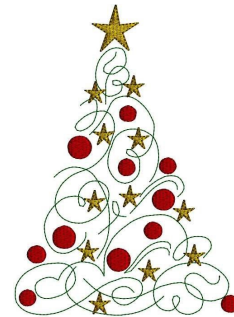




# LIFE LINE



## DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER OF FAITH UMC

OUR MISSION: MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

OUR FOCUS: REACHING THE NEXT PERSON FOR JESUS AND GOD'S KINGDOM

OUR VISION: DEEPLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, MAKING GOD'S KINGDOM REAL

### THE VIEW FROM HERE

*"The days are surely coming, says the LORD,  
when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah."  
Jeremiah 33:14*

Let me be clear: The spiritual discipline of waiting is not my favorite. From my earliest memories surrounding Christmas, my lack of interest in waiting displayed itself in always being the first to have unwrapped all of my gifts. And even that didn't always hold surprise, thanks to my well-honed skill of shaking and shifting packages with the intent of detecting the gift held inside.

Yet, here we are, entering Advent – a season of waiting. The prophet Jeremiah gives voice to the waiting in these words from the Old Testament. The people of God were waiting for the Messiah – and the waiting wasn't fun for them either. Jeremiah doesn't deny the pain of the present for God's people. He is, after all, known as the weeping prophet. And still, in the midst of the dark days, in the midst of the hard waiting, Jeremiah holds out the hope that is found in the promise of God.

I can almost hear God whispering through the proclamation of the prophet, "Children, I know it is hard, this waiting. But hold on to my promise. The day is coming, I promise you this. Justice and righteousness are on the way – new life, springing from what seemed like a long dead hope. Jesus is almost here. Just hold on."

I know there are a lot of folk who feel like they are waiting on a Word from God that is taking way too long to be delivered. Waiting for the call from an estranged love one. Waiting for a plan from the doctors for treatment. Waiting for a time when this virus doesn't impact so much of our lives. Waiting for justice and peace to replace hatred and oppression. Waiting for someone...anyone...to tell them that they are loved and they are enough. Waiting for the good news that their hope will not disappoint.

If I could have the audacity to speak a word from God to you in this moment, it would be: Whatever promise you are waiting for God to fulfill, child, hold on. I know the waiting is hard, and it seems like it's taking forever. But I promise you this – God has a 100% record of faithfulness in keeping promises – and the streak is not going to end with you.

Lauren Daigle, whose lyrics and voice and heart regularly come together to wreck me, sings these words:

*There is no distance that cannot be covered over and over.  
You're not defenseless. I'll be your shelter. I'll be your armor.  
I hear you whisper underneath your breath  
I hear your SOS, your SOS.  
I will send out an army to find you in the middle of the darkest night.  
It's true, I will rescue you.  
I will never stop marching to reach you in the middle of the hardest fight.  
It's true, I will rescue you.*

Songwriters: Jason Ingram / Paul Mabury / Lauren Daigle

Rescue Lyrics © Essential Music Publishing, Capitol Christian Music Group, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

The promise to which we cling during this Advent season (and always), is that help is on the way. And His name is Jesus. The One whose birth we celebrate, whose presence is our sustaining, and whose return we long for, hears and knows and loves and rescues. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

With you in the waiting,  
Pastor Larry



Larry L. Leland  
Lead Pastor  
lleland@faithum.net  
570-368-2459

### IN-PERSON WORSHIP TO RESUME JANUARY 10, 2021

As in-person worship is currently paused, it is our hope to return to in-person worship on Sunday, January 10. In the meantime, we will continue to offer online worship experiences streamed at both 8:15 and 9:45. Plans for Christmas Eve worship will be shared soon, which may include a combination of in-person outdoor and online services.

Know that we continue to pray with and for you. We ask that you continue to pray for us and for one another. If you have a pastoral care need, please let us know. If you have opportunity, connect with sisters and brothers however it is safe. As you are able, please continue to support the ministries of Faith Church with your prayers, your presence (online in worship, or in smaller groups), your gifts, your service (because the work of the kingdom is not stopping), and your witness (showing the light of Christ and sharing your story).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office, which will remain open.



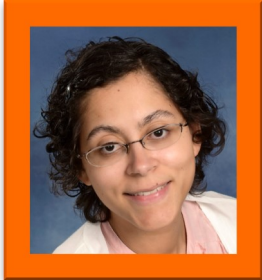


# CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

## KID CONNECTION - ORANGE SPOTLIGHT (THE YELLOW OF CHURCH AND THE RED OF HOME COMBINE TO MAKE ORANGE.)

Worship will look a bit different this Christmas season than it has in past years, but lessons are still available for your child online every Sunday by visiting our church Facebook page or Kid Connection Facebook page. Please contact Marion Handley if you are unable to access the lessons.

During December, we spend an entire month looking at different aspects of the Christmas story with kids of all ages! Our preschoolers hear about how God sent Jesus into the world as a baby! As we tell about angels, announcements, shepherds, and visits from wise men we will remember that God gave us Jesus because He loves us. Our elementary kids will also hear about Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and others all journeying to Bethlehem for the birth of Christ but as they do they will be reminded over and over of the WHY behind Jesus’ arrival. Jesus is the best gift ever and the reason we can have joy in every season!



**Marion Handley**  
Director of Children’s Ministries  
mhandley@faithum.net  
570-368-2459



## Family Advent Traditions

As a church we are beginning a new season. We call this season “Advent.” “Advent” is a word that means “to come.” What are we waiting for? Who is coming? Jesus! Each year on Christmas we remember the birth of Jesus when God became a human being as a baby born in Bethlehem. It is so important that we celebrate every year with friends and family and our church. Advent also happens every year in the weeks leading up to Christmas. It is a time when we get ready, preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ. One way that families and churches choose to set aside Advent as special is by using an Advent wreath and lighting candles on that wreath to symbolize the hope, joy, and peace that Jesus brings.

Laminated Advent wreaths and tea lights are available for pick up from the church or can be delivered to your home. Won’t you join us as a family, preparing your hearts for Christmas by committing a few minutes each day using the provided materials or another Advent devotional? Take time to reflect on God’s truths and to pray for our community and our world and also for the recipients of this year’s Christmas offering. Let’s choose to wait in joyful hope!

## KID CONNECTION SERVING TEAM SCHEDULE

- Team 1: Betsy &/or Dave Bjorkman, Jenn/Karli Larson, Lori Parke
- Team 2: Ryan Tira, Amy Tucker, Kim Rakestraw
- Team 3: Danielle or Matt Harris, Carrie Knapp, Cherie Wurster
- Team 4: Susan Ravert, Jennie Crawford, Lisa Good
- Team 5: Rachel and Chris Knipe, Tessa Little, Lauren Caputo
- Team 6: Brenda Clouser, Chelsea Howe, EvieLynn Perry
- Team 7: Crystal Miller, Brigitte Wright, Chelsea Burkholder
- Team 8: Andrea Lucas, Julie Vogel, Shawn Coles

## UPWARD BASKETBALL UPDATE

While we are excited to bring the Upward sports ministry to Faith Church, the current conditions and restrictions have made it necessary to delay the start until at least the middle of January. Our hopes are to be able to proceed beginning on January 18<sup>th</sup> and we will be reevaluating conditions at the beginning of the year. We will need plenty of volunteers to help run this ministry. So if you love Jesus and want to help share His love with kids, please sign up to volunteer with Upward at upward@faithum.net. The season will likely run through the middle of April.



## FAITH CHURCH STAFF

- Larry L. Leland, Lead Pastor.....lleland@faithum.net
- Beth Jones, Interim Associate Pastor.....bjones@faithum.net
- Jim Anthony, Facilities Assistant.....jim\_anthonysr@comcast.net
- Diane Dunlap, Office Administrator.....office@faithum.net
- Marion Handley, Director of Children’s Ministries .....mhandley@faithum.net
- Lisa Konkle, Choral Coordinator/Organist.....lkonkle@faithum.net
- Deb Lindner, Voices of Faith Accompanist .....dndlindner@epix.net
- Kristen Lowe, Tech Director .....klowe@faithum.net
- David Miller, Facilities Manager .....dmiller@faithum.net
- Brett Newell, Director of Student Ministries .....bnewell@faithum.net
- Deb Ottenmiller, Director of Group Life.....dottenmiller@faithum.net
- Shannon Perrotta, Nursery/Childcare Coordinator.....sperrotta@faithum.net
- Lauren Reeder, Worship Leader.....lreeder@faithum.net
- Julie Vogel, Business Manager.....jvogel@faithum.net

## FAITH CHURCH COUNCIL

- Ben Meckbach - Chairperson
- Lisa Vrabec - Recorder
- Keith Atherholt
- Jim Carpenter
- Jerry Cartwright
- Sheila Lomax
- Paula Robinson
- Mike Steinbacher
- Christina Wright

## CHURCH CONFERENCE HELD IN NOVEMBER

In the United Methodist Church, a church conference is an annual meeting, and was held on November 12. This annual business and vision meeting for the congregation completes important business for the church, including setting the pastors’ salary packages, electing officers for the coming year, and other yearly tasks. If you were unable to attend, there are information packets available in the office. Feel free to stop by and pick one up.

## 2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2021 boxes of assigned offering envelopes will be available beginning December 14. Please stop by and pick yours up during regular business hours. If you do not have assigned envelopes and would like them, or you receive them and don’t use them, please call the church office at 570-368-2459 and let us know. Thank you!



## FAITH STUDENT MINISTRIES



**Brett Newell**  
Director of Student Ministries  
bnewell@faithum.net  
570-368-2459 973-715-8549

We just finished up our November lesson series "Stretch" where we learned about ways we can be stretching our faith. For December we will be starting our Christmas series where we will be learning lessons from the Christmas story.



Confirmation is right around the corner and is for students who are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and up who want to grow in their Faith. We will be starting classes in January, but we will be having an orientation meeting for students and parents on December 13 at 11:00 am via ZOOM. If you plan on being a part of Confirmation or are interested and want to learn more about the process, please email Brett Newell to RSVP for the orientation meeting.

## GROW / SERVE

### COMING IN 2021!

- Women's Foundation Class
- Online Training Options for New and Current Community Groups
- Online Classes for Growth



**Deb Ottenmiller**  
Dir. of Group Life  
and Assimilation  
dottenmiller@faithum.net  
570-368-2459  
Text-570-244-7002

### UPCOMING CLASSES - 2021 CALENDAR DATES

<u>Starting Point</u>	<u>Member Class</u>	<u>Reception of Membership</u>	<u>Baptism Class</u>	<u>Baptism Celebration in Worship</u>
1/17	1/24	<u>During Worship</u>	1/10	1/31 9/26
3/7	5/2	2/7	4/11	4/18 11/21
4/25	10/3	5/16	6/13	6/20
9/19		10/10	9/12	
			11/7	

## SERVE AND GO



**Pastor Beth Jones**  
Interim Associate Pastor  
bjones@faithum.net  
570-368-2459

### CHRISTMAS OFFERING

We are in the season of Advent and Christmas here at Faith Church, the time when we kick off our Christmas Offering! This year we are looking forward to supporting 3 vital ministries:

1. The "World Service Fund" of the UMC is an opportunity for us to support mission work worldwide in places we could never reach on our own! These funds impact lives in 4 areas of focus: Global health - Raising up Christian leaders - Ministry with the poor - Developing new opportunities to worship.
2. Closer to home, we will be focused on our conference camping program, always committed to "Building authentic connections in Christ, community and creation" through summer camping programs for kids of all ages and retreat opportunities year round. The Camping and Retreat program has faced challenges this summer as camp and retreat ministries have not been happening as in previous years and we are hoping to support them as they look to possibilities in 2021 to connect people to Christ through their encounter with the natural world and one another.
3. Here at Faith Church, we are excited to see Upward Basketball (for grades K-6) come to the Faith Community Center this January and your funds will help support this vital ministry as it "uses the power of sports to share the gospel and promote the discovery of Jesus in every community".

### Order Your Poinsettias

This year poinsettias may be purchased (\$9 each) **for pickup the week of Dec. 14-18**. An online bulletin insert with the names of your loved one(s) will be included on Sunday, 12/20. Send your order form and check to the church office or drop it by during regular business hours. (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR IN THE BULLETIN.)

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

# of plants \_\_\_\_\_ X \$9.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Faith UMC with "poinsettia" on the memo line.





## SERMON SERIES

### REPEAT THE SOUNDING *Joy*

AN ADVENT SERIES STARTING NOVEMBER 29

NOVEMBER 29 - HOPE - PREPARE HIM ROOM  
DECEMBER 06 - LOVE - OUR SONGS EMPLOY  
DECEMBER 13 - JOY - HIS BLESSINGS FLOW  
DECEMBER 20 - PEACE - HE RULES THE WORLD

### **Advent for Families**

We are encouraging our whole congregation to celebrate Advent together from our separate homes using Advent kits that are available for drive-by pickup at the church beginning 11/25. Each kit contains a snowflake shaped Advent wreath, 5 candles, and a table tent for guided family dinner table discussions about the sermon series. Celebrating Advent can become a part of your tradition in any season of life at any age. Families can gather around a table, small groups can gather to light candles via ZOOM, or grandparents can read the scriptures to grandkids over the phone. Your celebration can be as unique as you are! Contact Marion Handley, at [mhandley@faithum.net](mailto:mhandley@faithum.net) if you would like an Advent kit delivered to your home or materials emailed to you to print at home.

### **REPEAT THE SOUNDING JOY**

This is Faith Church's Advent Worship Series! Why don't you experience this Series with your family or friends, beyond weekend worship? There are great discussion and application handouts for each week, available free to you by emailing Joy at [jbarilla25@gmail.com](mailto:jbarilla25@gmail.com). These would be awesome to experience with your family and friends. Don't miss this opportunity to Grow!

### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

At the time of this writing, Christmas Eve service times and places have yet to be determined. Watch the Faith Church Facebook page for updates.

### **FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm

Phone #: 570-368-2459

Email: [office@faithum.net](mailto:office@faithum.net)

Web: [www.faithum.net](http://www.faithum.net) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville](https://www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville)

If you would like to receive the newsletter (in color!) via email, please contact the church office.

**PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR CHRISTMAS WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES UPDATE.**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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DECEMBER 2020

Life Line

**FAITH CHURCH**  
700 Fairview Drive  
Montoursville, PA 17754  
570-368-2459 | [www.faitum.net](http://www.faitum.net)

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Isaiah 9:6

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As our staff met this morning, I was reminded of the powerful truth that Jesus didn't come in expected ways on that first Christmas. And though this Advent and Christmas will not look like what I expected for our first season together, I do believe that Jesus will show up in our midst in powerful ways.

As promised, I wanted to share with you our plans for worship throughout December and including Christmas Eve. On the Sundays in December, as well as January 3, we will continue to stream Traditional worship at 8:15 and Contemporary worship at 9:45. I'm grateful to the dozens of people who are sharing their gifts to make these services happen.

For the week of Christmas, we will be offering five different worship opportunities:

- **Sunday, December 20, 4:30 p.m.** – Winter Solstice Bonfire Worship – in partnership with First UMC, Williamsport - a celebration of God's light shining forth in the darkness. On this, the 'longest night' of the year we will gather outside around the fire to celebrate and release the year and look forward as the days begin to grow longer. This worship experience will take place at 64 Caraway Dr. Cogan Station, PA 17728. If you plan on joining us for this service, we ask that you sign up here: <https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showRSVPSignUp/805044aabc22a2fc1-winter>
- **Thursday, December 24, 2:30 p.m.** – Outdoor Service of Lessons and Carols – bring your lawn chair, blankets, hot coffee and Christmas spirit as we gather outside at Faith Church for worship. We will socially distance, wear masks, and join in hearing the scripture, singing (yes, singing!) carols, and sharing the light with one another (from glowsticks this year). If you plan on joining us for this service, we ask that you sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E44A4A923A5F58-christmas>
- **Thursday, December 24, 4:30 p.m.** – Outdoor Service of Lessons and Carols – bring your lawn chair, blankets, hot coffee, *flashlight* and Christmas spirit as we gather outside at Faith Church for worship. We will socially distance, wear masks, and join in hearing the scripture, singing (yes, singing!) carols, and sharing the light with one another (from glowsticks this year). If you plan on joining us for this service, we ask that you sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E44A4A923A5F58-christmas1>
- **Thursday, December 24, anytime after 5:00 p.m.** – Traditional Candlelight Service streamed online at [www.faithum.net](http://www.faithum.net) and [www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville](https://www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville). This service will include all that you have come to expect from our Traditional Christmas Eve service, including carols, Advent Wreath Lighting, special music from Voices of Faith and our Bell Choir, a Christmas message and candle lighting. *We invite you to have candles handy for your family to light, wherever you'll be joining us for worship. If you need candles for this service, please contact the church office, and we'll make sure we get them to you.*
- **Thursday, December 24, anytime after 7:00 p.m.** – Contemporary Candlelight Service streamed online at [www.faithum.net](http://www.faithum.net) and [www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville](https://www.facebook.com/faithmontoursville). This service will include all that you have come to expect from our Contemporary Christmas Eve service, including carols and worship songs, led by Lauren Reeder and members of the Praise Team, Advent Wreath Lighting, a Christmas message and candle lighting. *We invite you to have candles handy for your family to light, wherever you'll be joining us for worship. If you need candles for this service, please contact the church office, and we'll make sure we get them to you.*

As we journey through the Advent season together approaching our celebration of Christmas, even as we long for Christ's return, we encourage you to engage in those activities that draw you and your loved ones closer to God, to one another, and help you grow in love for the world. Celebrate your own Advent wreath lighting, reading scripture as a family and praying together each week. Show generosity through giving to the church, or through our Christmas offering or Angel Tree. Reach out to neighbors and offer them tangible signs of God's love and grace. Be creative and safe in the ways that you gather with your small groups. Bake a birthday cake for Jesus and sing to him on Christmas morning. And join your Faith Church family in worship throughout the season – trusting that Jesus comes into our message and brings life!

In Christ's Love and Repeating the Sounding Joy,  
Pastor Larry

