



LIFE LINE



DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER OF FAITH UMC

OUR MISSION: MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD
OUR VISION: DEEPLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, MAKING GOD'S KINGDOM REAL

LOOK WHAT HAPPENED IN NOVEMBER!



Deck the Halls

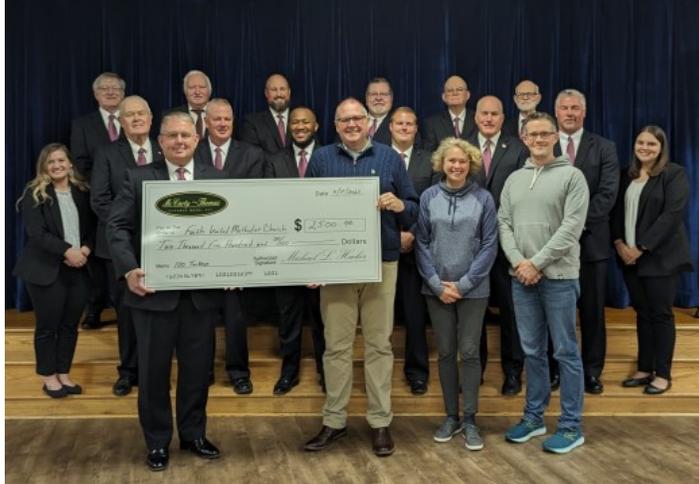
Habitat for Humanity



Baptisms



Filling Thanksgiving Baskets for neighbors in need



Staff of the McCarty-Thomas Funeral Home present staff with a contribution for the Thanksgiving Basket Ministry.



THE VIEW FROM HERE



Larry L. Leland
Lead Pastor
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570-368-2459



The View From Here

“And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” - Isaiah 9:6

The season of Advent is about more than decorating our homes, wrapping presents, and preparing for holiday travel. It is a season of preparing our hearts to worship the One who was born on Christmas – the same One whose return we long for – Jesus. Centuries before Jesus’ birth, the prophet Isaiah spoke of a coming ruler, born of a virgin, who would come to set the world aright. Christians have come to understand that Isaiah’s prophecy pointed to the birth of Jesus.



This Advent, we’ll be looking at one piece of Isaiah’s prophecy. What does it mean that we believe Jesus is the fulfillment of that word from God through Isaiah? How do we cling to Jesus as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace?

I hope you will join us throughout Advent to focus this season on who Jesus is, and to prepare our hearts and homes for the celebration of his birth on Christmas.

Anticipating Joy!
PL

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES



With Christmas Eve falling on Sunday this year, we will gather in four opportunities for worship over the course of the day. We invite you to consider how and when you and your loved ones will worship. We also invite you to pray about serving at an additional worship service this year, as we welcome more guests on Christmas Eve than any other day of the year.

- 9:00 a.m. - Combined Service for the 4th Sunday of Advent, focusing on Jesus as the Prince of Peace, with combined music groups - gathering in the FCC.
- 3:00 p.m. – Family-Focused Service of Lessons and Carols, with Praise Kids and Kids Bells – gathering in the sanctuary.
- 5:00 p.m. – Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, with Bell Choir, Voices of Faith – gathering in the sanctuary.
- 7:00 p.m. – Contemporary Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, with Praise Team – gathering in the FCC.

ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS

Order your poinsettia plant(s) to decorate the church for Christmas. Plants may be purchased for \$8.00 each and may be placed In Memory of or In Honor of loved ones. Plants must be paid for at the time of ordering. **Hurry, the deadline for orders is Sunday, December 10.** (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR IN THE BULLETIN. THANK YOU!)

In Memory of: _____
 In Memory of: _____
 In Honor of: _____
 In Honor of: _____
 # of plants _____ X \$8.00 each = _____
 From _____

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

FAITH CHURCH STAFF

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FAITH CHURCH COUNCIL

Jim Carpenter - Chairperson
 Lisa Vrabec - Recorder
 Ben Clark
 Hillary Hofstrom
 Scott Konkle
 Chip Lamade
 Sheila Lomax
 Susan Marshall
 Paul Zimmerer

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



Jessica Neiman
Dir. of Children's Ministries
jneiman@faithum.net



ORANGE SPOTLIGHT

With the busyness of the Christmas season, it's easy to lose sight of why we celebrate in the first place. We forget, God's people were anticipating a Rescuer who would come and save the world. That's what makes a countdown like an advent calendar so powerful. This practice can help us prepare our hearts to wonder at the very mystery, beauty, and LOVE of God's incarnation—God with us! This month families are invited to stop by the Kid Connection Welcome Desk to pick up a family advent devotional, to purposely slow down and enter the story of waiting, preparing, and finally celebrating the coming of the Messiah. Each week in Kid Connection we will shine a spotlight on crucial moments in the story of Jesus' birth as we count down to Christmas. In addition to the advent devotional, Jessica will be posting a short weekly video on the Kid Connection Facebook page. Join us in "Deck the Halls" preparing for the greatest gift ever—Jesus!



KID CONNECTION SERVING TEAM SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024

- Team 1:** Jenn Larson, Linda Lloyd, Lauren Reeder, Vanessa Johnston
- Team 2:** Ryan Tira, Amy Tucker, Kim Rakestraw, Stephanie Matlack
- Team 3:** Danielle or Matt Harris, Carrie Knapp, Cherie Wurster, Jamie Burns & Lilly
- Team 4:** Lisa Good, Tiffany Feigles, Taylor Stark, Kim Winters, Linda Richards
- Team 5:** Rachel/Chris Knipe, Tessa Little, Jenna LoCricchio, Erica Blake
- Team 6:** Brenda Clouser, Chelsea Howe, EvieLynn Perry, Kristi Michael, Brittany Ring
- Team 7:** Crystal Miller, Brigitte Wright, Chelsea Burkholder, Chris Meckbach
- Team 8:** Andrea Lucas, Julie Vogel, Pamela/Riley/Cameron Nelson, Rebecca McDaniel

- 12/03 Team 7
- 12/10 Team 8
- 12/17 Team 1
- 12/24 No Kid Connection.
Nursery available!
- 12/31 Team 2

FAITH CHURCH NURSERY SCHEDULE

- 12/03 - Michelle Eckert
- 12/10 - Nicole Duarte
- 12/17 - Katie Farley, Kitty Hofer
- 12/24 - Christmas Eve Services (Nursery Only) 9 a.m.; 3:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m.; 7:00 p.m.

Please help serve and bless families who have little ones! Nursery is available for all 4 Christmas Eve services but we need helpers. You can sign up to serve in the nursery during one of the four services by going to the link below or by using the QR code to the right. You can also reach out to Jessica at jneiman@faithum.net

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0845AAAF23A7FC1-45297291-christmas>

- 12/31 - Hilary Hofstrom

- 1/07 Team 3
- 1/14 Team 4
- 1/21 Team 5
- 1/28 Team 6



"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14b



Snapshots of our FX Family Worship Experience on October 29th



FAITH STUDENT MINISTRIES

FSM 6:8 - GRADES 6-8 - SUNDAYS FROM 4:00-6:00 PM
FSM 9:12 - GRADES 9-12 - SUNDAYS FROM 5:30-7:30 PM

Hello Faith Church,

We have experienced another wonderful month in FSM. Our time as a group has grown us in many ways.

One way we grew was we just finished our series on navigating the Bible and how that helps us know God. In these lessons, we learned that the context behind scripture matters and that God uses the Bible to change us.

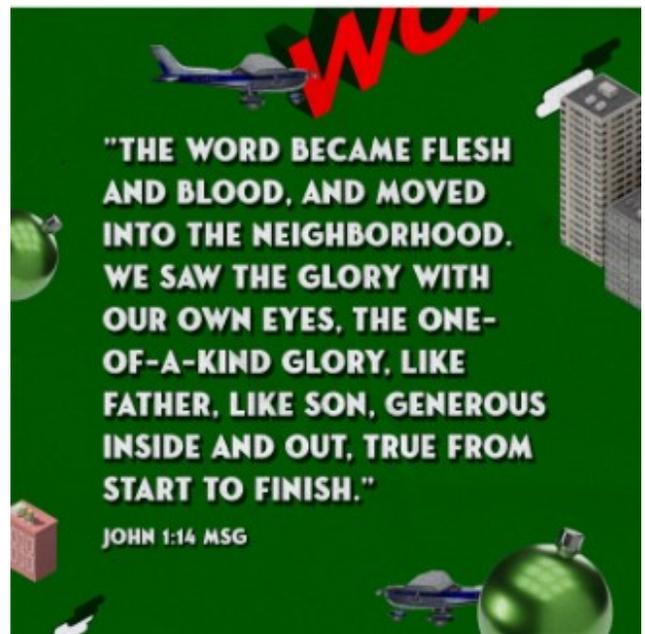
Another growing experience was with Music with Mason. Our youth sang their hearts out to "Who You Say I Am" & "God So Loved." These songs have powerful messages we all need to be reminded of. We continued the night with "Pen Paling with Mrs. Tira" where we sent letters to more than 20 home-bound Faith Church members. What a way to love one another in the extension of the church. We also had a student-lead devotion by Bella Grub, where she shared some good news from Proverbs 11:25 and Mathew 5:16.

In December we begin a new series about the good news of Christmas and Jesus becoming flesh and walking with us. This is a three-week series which we'll end with a FSM Christmas party celebration! We are also planning on an open gym / movie night somewhere between Christmas and New Years.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the leaders who have been supporting FSM with their time and love for the students. We have a great team and are blessed to have so many church members that support what we are doing.



Christian Calehuff
FSM Team Leader
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CONGREGATIONAL CARE



Marion Handley
Dir. of Age-Level Ministries
and Cong. Care
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570-368-2459

Our calling as Christians is to care for those around us, serving as an overflow of our love for our Lord. As we look around we'll see many opportunities for serving within our congregation and in our larger community. We may even find as we look around that there is need in our own lives. Whether you are a lifetime attender of many decades or visiting us as you look for a church to call home, I invite you to share your needs with our team. Our Congregational Care Team serves by praying with and for you and those you love, mailing cards to folks recovering from illness or grieving losses, visiting with people in hospitals and nursing homes, delivering meals through the Casserole Ministry, bringing home communion to our homebound members and more. It is our joy and privilege to walk with you through your celebrations, challenges, and transitions. Confidential prayer is always available. I encourage you to let us know how we can help. The simplest way to share your need with us is using the Connect Card in your weekly bulletin, but you may also call the church office or send an email.

Interested in serving our congregation as a member of the Congregational Care Team? We welcome new additions to the team! The next team meeting is December 17 following the 9:45 worship service. Contact mhandley@faithum.net or call the church office for more information.



GROW/SERVE



Deb Ottenmiller
Dir. of Group Life
and Assimilation
dottemiller@faithum.net
570-368-2459

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

Faith Church Christmas Eve Sign-ups to Serve are now in full swing! Whether you love to care for babies, greet people or clean - we have a place for you to serve!

You can sign up 3 ways: Insert in the weekly bulletin, at the Guest Hub, or on Sign-up Genius at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0845AAAF23A7FC1-45297291-christmas>

Plan to bless our guests this Christmas - sign up today! No experience required.



WOMEN'S GATHERING

PEW SISTERS. Real women. Real lives. Real faith stories. Every woman in the pew has a story of God's faithfulness. We share the same faith, eat at the same table and inherit the same paradise. Join us on Wednesday, December 20 at 10:00 am in Faith Café and every third Wednesday of the month going forward.

FAITH LADIES RETREAT - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

A few months ago, Kristin Lowe and I were sitting in my car, chatting about how we were longing for some deeper connections with others at church. Sundays are sometimes a hard time to establish new connections; with busy schedules and what life might throw at us in a given week, adding in the time needed for more genuine and authentic relationships can be hard. And while we do see familiar faces and smiles on Sundays, there are many women we would love to get to know without the constraints of time before and after services. Do you ever feel this way?

We got to thinking: Why not carve out some intentional time for us to be together, play games, eat food, and worship in pjs or sweatpants?! Consider joining us for what we hope and pray will be the first of many Faith women's retreats. We have reserved Wesley Forest Camp and Retreat Center for March 22-23, 2024. We will join together Friday night after dinner and then head back home on Saturday after lunch. Women of all ages are welcomed and encouraged to attend. More information will be coming your way in the months ahead, but for now, save the date! Reach out to Kristin Lowe or Rachel Knipe for additional details, or if you have ideas for the retreat.

OUTREACH

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Advent has arrived and we are again made aware of the lavish generosity of God in Christ. And so we are pleased to reflect that same generosity through our annual Christmas offering. Each year, we donate the entirety of our Christmas offering to ministry partners at home and abroad, doing good work in Jesus' name.

Half of this year's offering will go to support the Habitat for Humanity Faith Build project—a home built for a local family in need with the finances and labor provided by local churches. We are blessed to be able to not only give of our time and talents on-site on the 2nd Saturdays of each month, but also with our treasure—contributing to the purchase of materials to make home ownership a possibility for a local qualified family.

The other half of our offering will go to support our ongoing missional initiatives with a group of trusted partners which include the World Service Fund, KinderCamp, Sojourner Truth Ministries, West End Christian Community Center, United Churches Food Pantry, and Family Promise. These organizations are making a real difference in our community and beyond, and we are pleased to partner with them in their good work. So please continue to keep that good work in your prayers and let's be generous toward them as we seek to love the world he loves so dearly.



Mason Neiman
Director of Worship &
Creative Arts
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570-368-2459

ANGEL TREE GIFTS

Once again this year we will be collecting gifts for some of our young students in the Montoursville School district who may be facing financial challenges this season. To participate, look for the Angel Tree in Faith Café at the entrance to the FCC. Each ornament on the tree will have a gift idea. You may take the ornament home with you, purchase the gift listed, wrap the gift (placing the tag on the outside of the gift) and return it to the bin at the Angel tree anytime before Wednesday, December 20th. If you have any questions, contact Beth Jones at harvestofhope@faithum.net

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY DECEMBER WORK DAY

On Saturday, December 9th, Faith Church members and friends will once again be putting on tool belts at the Habitat for Humanity Faith Build site on Scott St. in Williamsport. The Faith Build is a home built with the labor, lumber, and love provided by area churches and faith communities. This will be our fifth volunteer day at the site, and it is always a wonderful time of fellowship and contributing to neighbors in need. So whether know a lick about building or not, consider yourself invited! And if building's not your thing, but food is, you can always help provide lunches for the crew. If that interests you, feel free to reach out to Becky Stabley at (570) 368-1714 as she is kindly spearheading keeping everyone fed and watered. Also, if you'd like to participate, but can't this month, Faith Church has committed to volunteering the 2nd Saturday of each month until the house is complete. If you have any questions, email Mason Neiman at mneiman@faithum.net.

FAMILY PROMISE

Our Family Promise host week is Dec 24-30. We will be providing meals to 4 families in the program. This would be a great opportunity for your small group or family to reach out to those in need so they can see the love and care of our church community. Meals would be dropped off at the Day Center on Hepburn St in Williamsport. If interested please contact Darci Kirby 570.916.0113 or darcikirby619@gmail.com or sign up using the QR code or link <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508044BA4A72BA7F85-46435988-meal>



NEW SERMON SERIES



December 3 - *Wonderful Counselor*
 December 10 - *Mighty God*
 December 17 - *Everlasting Father*
 December 24 - *Prince of Peace (9:00 combined)*



Hold onto your hats! Faith Church is planning a mission trip! While we are in the beginning planning stages, Faith Church is partnering with Appalachian Service Project to bless our neighbors in West Virginia for a week between July 7th and August 3rd. And if you've graduated 6th grade, you are welcome to participate! The cost is \$325 per person. More details will be coming in January, but we're putting it on your radar now to help you make plans for next summer. This is a great opportunity to love our neighbors and enjoy Christian fellowship along the way! If you are interested, feel free to reach out to Mason Neiman at mneiman@faithum.net.

SHEEP STUFF



PRAISE KIDS CHRISTMAS MUSICAL-SHEEP STUFF

- Sunday, December 3 at 3:00 pm in the Faith Community Center - All are welcome!
- Dinner following in Faith Café - bring a dish to share - chicken and tableware provided

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OFFICE HOURS: Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am-3:30 pm and Friday-8:00 am-Noon
 (Closed Daily 12:30-1:00 pm for Lunch)

PHONE #: 570-368-2459 EMAIL: office@faithum.net

WEB: www.faithum.net FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/faithmontourville

HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST? Call or email the office or fill out an online Connect Card on our website.

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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DECEMBER 2023