



Our mission:
to nurture disciples of Jesus Christ
who join boldly with the Spirit's work
in the world.

A Service for the Lord's Day
Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023

10:30 a.m.

We Gather at God's Call

Introit

Greeting

Pouring of the Water

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Bo and Patti Hobbie

How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards, and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others.

By learning people's stories, and finding common ground.

By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

There are a million ways to practice love.

So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

Prelude

What Child Is This
Logan Davis & Jan Arnold

- Stephen Bulla

*Call to Worship (*responsively*)

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

THE COVENANT CLASS

Dec. 24 and Jan. 7 the class will conclude studying the Advent devotional How Does a Weary World Rejoice? Class will not meet *Dec. 31*.

Beginning *Jan. 14*, the class will study "Invitation to the Old Testament" by the Disciple series for eight weeks.

FAITHFUL CONVERSATIONS

The class will not meet *Dec. 24 or 31*. *Jan. 7-14* the class will study loneliness, focusing on the epidemic of loneliness in our culture and types of personal, individual loneliness.

To learn more about Adult Education programs, speak to Pastor Keith, visit massanuttenchurch.org, or call (540) 434-6194.

CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS

CHILDREN (THRU 5TH GRADE)

Faith Village: Explore Bible stories through learning styles such as art, music, cooking, drama, & games. 9:30 a.m.

Godly Play (Pre-K—2nd grade): Learn Bible stories through wonder and storytelling using wooden figures and felt underlays. During worship.

YOUTH (6TH-12TH GRADE)

High School Breakfast (9th—12th): Enjoy breakfast food & relaxed talk about faith & anything else. 9:30 a.m.

Youth Group: Sunday dinner, fellowship, & fun while learning about your faith. 6-8 p.m.

Fun with Handbells: Explore the fun of ringing from the basics to beyond with the opportunity to ring in worship. 5:00 p.m.

Learn more: speak to Hannah Altman, visit massanuttenchurch.org, or call (540) 434-6194.

CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS

*My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?*

Refrain:

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.*

*Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.
(Refrain)*

*From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.
(Refrain)*

*Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.
(Refrain)*

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession (*responsively*)

Holy God, more days than not, hope feels like the rain. We try to hold onto it with cupped hands, but eventually, it slips right on through. Forgive us for holding hope so loosely. Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to define tomorrow. We know that this world needs people of hope, so today we pray: turn us into those people. Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope for the world. With open hearts we pray, amen.

*Assurance of Forgiveness (*responsively*)

Body of Christ, no matter how many times we let hope slip through our fingers, we still belong to God. So hear and repeat these words after me:

Life at Massanutten

- **Mark your calendars to join us in worship on Christmas Eve - Sunday, Dec. 24**
 - **10:30 a.m.** - The theme of this morning's service is "We sing stories of hope." You'll be invited to request Advent or Christmas hymns from the hymnal for the congregation to sing!
 - **4:30 p.m.** - Christmas Eve Family Candle Lighting Service. While there will not be nursery care available, the service will welcome the participation of God's children of all ages and the children/family corner in the Gathering Area will be available for parents.
 - **7:00 p.m.** - Christmas Eve Candle Lighting and Communion Service. A childcare attendant will be available in the Gathering Area to assist with small children if needed.
- We will receive our **Christmas Joy Offering** today. Gifts to this offering will be used to assist current and retired PC(USA) church workers, as well as educational institutions related to the denomination that equip communities of color.
- **Open Doors News:** MPC will host the shelter in our space January 15—January 29. Check out the table in the Narthex today! You may also volunteer to provide items needed by following the link in the weekly email. To volunteer to provide transportation, contact Dale Dobroth or the church office for more information.
- **Office hours update:** The church office will be closed from December 22nd - January 1st. Voicemail and email will be checked regularly.
- **MPC's Hunger Ministries** continue to provide food to families in our area. During the month of November, the *Food Pantry* served 26 families which included 88 individuals, 34 of whom were under the age of 18. *Blessings in a Bag* is currently providing 62 bags of food to children at South River Elementary School each week. Thank you for supporting these ministries with your time, gifts and prayers.
- **Inclement Weather Policy for MPC**—In case of inclement weather, check church closings on WHSV (Harrisonburg television station) or the church website www.massanuttenchurch.org
- **Safety Corner**—If you test positive for COVID-19, stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home. You are likely most infectious during these first 5 days. Wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others at home and in public.

This Week At MPC

Sunday, December 24

9:00am Covenant Class
10:30am Worship
4:30pm Family Christmas Eve Service with Candlelighting
7:00pm Christmas Eve Service with Candlelighting and Communion

Monday, Dec. 25 – Monday, Jan. 1

Church Office Closed

Wednesday, December 27

7:30am Men’s Prayer Group

Sunday, December 31

10:30am Worship

Monday, January 1

Church Office Closed

Tuesday, January 2

8:00am *Church Office Re-opens*

***THE CONGREGATION, ELDERS, AND STAFF
OF MASSANUTTEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY
A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS!***

Serving December 24 at 10:30 a.m.

Door Monitor: Robin Reed

Greeters: Tom & Gina Holden

Ushers & Water Pourers:
Larry & Pam French

Nursery: Katie Rodgers and Diann Reed

Faith Village:
No Faith Village today

Godly Play:
No Godly Play today

Youth: *No Youth Activities today*

Serving December 31

Door Monitor: Karen Enslin

Greeters: Doug Smith & Dwight Newman

Ushers & Water Pourers:
Fred Good & Cheryl Henderson

Nursery: Katie Rodgers
(In the Gathering Area)

Faith Village:
No Faith Village today

Godly Play: *No Godly Play today*

Youth: *No Youth Activities today—activities resume January 7th*

I am God’s beloved.
I am forgiven.
I am blessed and sent to serve.

**I am God’s beloved.
I am forgiven.
I am blessed and sent to serve.**

This is the good news of the Gospel. This is a hope we can hang our hats on.
Thanks be to God for God’s unending love. Amen.

*Response of Praise *Love Has Come (v. 1)* 110

*Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.*

*Sharing the Peace (*responsively*)
May the peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you all. **And also with you.**

We Gather Around God’s Word

*Sung Prayer for Illumination *Come, Come Emmanuel* 91

*Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
(sing three times)*

Anthem *Canticle of Hope* -Williams/Martin

Scripture Reading Luke 1:46-55, Luke 1:67-80

Meditation *How Does a Weary World Rejoice?* Pastor Keith Phillips
We Sing Stories of Hope

We Respond to God’s Word

*Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that hope can change the world.
We believe that God uses ordinary people,
like an unwed teenage mother, for extraordinary good.
And we believe that each of these ordinary people can make a difference.**

**We know that grief, fear, and suffering abound.
We know that suffering quells joy and makes it harder to hope.**

**But we choose hope anyway.
In the face of hardship, we hope together.
We hope with God. We hope for a better world.
This is our song. We believe; help our unbelief.
In Christ’s name we pray, amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

Response of Thanksgiving *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (v. 2)* 132

*Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!*

Concerns of the Congregation

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

We Are Sent to the World

*Hymn *People, Look East (vv. 1-4)* 105

*People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able;
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Guest, is on the way.*

*Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Rose, is on the way.*

*Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Bird, is on the way.*

*Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star, is on the way.*

*Benediction

*Benediction Response *People, Look East (v. 5)* 105

*Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.*

Massanutten Presbyterian Church Session

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Ka Guinn	Jan Arnold	Ashley Gordon-Becker
Matt Hamblen	Ben Craig	Jennifer Coffelt
John Kaltenborn	Bill Frazier	Deidre Lenderking
Bill Kilby	Chris Hamilton	Beth Smith
Ron Matthews	Julia Sensabaugh	
Janina Peachey		

Clerk: Jody Humphreys

Moderators: Rev. Ann Pettit and Rev. Keith Phillips

Massanutten Presbyterian Church Staff

Rev. Ann Pettit, Co-Pastor (apettit@massanuttenchurch.org)

Rev. Keith Phillips, Co-Pastor (kphillips@massanuttenchurch.org)

Bob Jerome, Director of Music (bjerome@massanuttenchurch.org)

Carol Lown, Organist (clown@massanuttenchurch.org)

Hannah Altman, Children and Youth Program Director (haltman@massanuttenchurch.org)

Karen Leecy, Office Manager (kleecy@massanuttenchurch.org)

Danielle Cunningham, Digital Media Communications Coord. (dcunningham@massanuttenchurch.org)

Katie Rodgers, Nursery Caregiver; **Greg Trobaugh**, Treasurer (gtrobaugh@comcast.net)

Dick Leecy and Cindy Grimes, Custodians

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