

PALM SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

Associate Member: United Church of Christ



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PALM SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2017

Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prayer

You keep surprising us, gracious God. Just when we get settled into our routines, you offer us a transforming birth. While we focus on greatness, you appear in humble circumstances among ordinary people, in out-of-the-way places. Amid the noise of our busyness, the angel's song suddenly penetrates our dulled awareness, and we must listen again. O God, keep us from fear or cynicism, lest we miss this opportunity to hear good news that is meant for us, and for all this hostile unbelieving world in which we live. Amen.

Prelude

"The Joys of Christmas"

Lani Smith

***Call to Worship #163**

"Lo! How a Rose"

(verses 1 and 2)

Prayer of Confession

Awesome God, we confess our fear to let down our guard, to feel the wonder, to believe the good news. Why would love choose to live among us, who are so unloving in our words and deeds? Why would you choose to place Trusting Innocence in the hands of sinners like us? We are afraid to bow down, lest we be accused of sentimental weakness. We hesitate to embrace the joy, lest it turn to disappointment in the cruel realities of this world. Forgive us, God, and awaken the child within us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us for lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly. Jesus Christ has come to us as God's gift. In Christ, we are redeemed from inequity and purified to live as God's own people. Glorify and praise God through your zeal for good deeds. Accept and live within the peace God provides.

A Spontaneous Christmas Story

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18 – 25 (NRSV p. 783; LP p. 1506)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.^[a] And he called His name JESUS.

Hymn #144 “The Hand That First Held Mary’s Child”

Narrator

This is a spontaneous story. While we often think of this story as part of God’s plan, something that was waiting to happen for a long time, there were many aspects of the story that happened unexpectedly—a star in the sky, baby born in a manger, angels appearing and shepherds arriving, to name a few. So as familiar as this story is to us, try to imagine it happening for the first time. Try to think about the spontaneity of the moment, the moment when God chose to enter our world and our lives in a new way.

Hymn #162 “The First Noel, the Angel Did Say” (verse 1)

Narrator

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

Hymn #161 “Once in Royal David’s City” (verses 1 and 4)

Narrator

He went to be registered with Mary to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

Hymn #160 “O Holy Night” (verse 1)

Narrator

Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn #147

“Away in a Manger”

(verses 1 and 3)

Narrator

In that region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then, an angel of the Lord stood before them! And the glory of the Lord shown around them and they were terrified.

Hymn #166

“While by the Sheep We Watched”

(verses 1 and 2)

Angel of the Lord

But the angel said to them,

“Fear not! For see, I bring you tidings of great joy to all the people! For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! And this will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Hymn #152

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

(verses 1 and 3)

Narrator

And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

Angels

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, and good will to all!

Hymn #168

“On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

(verses 1 and 4)

Narrator

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another:

Shepherds

Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which God has made known to us.

Hymn #159

“Sing We Now of Christmas”

(verses 1, 2 and 3)

Narrator

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Bringer of hope to the nations, glory be to you. We thank you that through the gift of your son, Jesus, we can now be called heirs of your righteousness and children of the covenant. By your grace we bear the name of Christ and are members of Christ’s household of faith. We thank you for his call to ministry and for the empowerment of your Spirit, which enables us to respond.

We pray that our ministry may be more effective in the new year that awaits us. We thank you for watching over us in the days that have passed. Take the good that we have done, and by your grace increase it to the glory of your holy name. We are sorry for those actions of ours that have frustrated your design for creation. Forgive our failures, and keep us from compounding useless endeavors.

We pray for those we have overlooked for whatever reasons: the lonely, the sick, the maligned, and the forgotten. Give us compassion to reach out to comfort them, and bestow in us a sense of your Holy Spirit, which can make them whole.

Increase our vision to see clearly the causes of anger, hurt, and resentment, and where it is within our power to act, save us from hesitation.

We pray that nations may heed the word of peace that Christ proclaims. Be with all who suffer as a result of human hostility, and, through Christ, break down the walls that keep us apart. Fill leaders with wisdom; bring humility to rulers. Make us effective witnesses to the hope of Christ’s salvation, and give us firm resolution to proclaim him Redeemer of all. Amen.

Call to Offering

We, who have known God’s gracious hospitality, are invited to share together in ministry to the homeless, the forgotten, the weary, the lost of our world. Our offerings of gratitude remind us of God’s claim on us and on all we possess. Let us make a generous response, in thanksgiving for all we have received.

Offertory

“What Child Is This?”

Ruth Elaine Schramm

...Things of Interest to Our Palm Schwenkfelder Family...

This week, please keep in your daily prayers:

Barry Slemmer, Jean Boreman, Leon Wohlbach, Lauren Crist, Bryan Schwoyer, Renée Shelly, Lena Johnson, Bob and Sandy Croll, Marvin Zeisloft Jr., Ralph Stevenson, Evelyn Bold, Ruth Adams, Darlene Jones, Rick Jones, Judy Yerger, Jacki Hensler, Erin Beighley and family, the Weinder family, Rochelle Ginder Manuel, Deena Updegrove, Rebecca Himmelwright, Joe and Sue Cooper, Jeff Treichler, Ernie Guldin, Meg Lester, Willard Long, Samantha Hossler and Ryan Woods, Lucile and Bob Jones, Sheryl Tomlin, Mae Gerhart, Marian Fox, Goldie Graber, Kylene Bertoia Hart, Mary and Heinz Herrmann, Martha Wolford, Devon Hawkins, Kerm Goda, Vern Weller, Donna Weller, Mary Hartman, Jen Fries, Mary Jane Burianek, Dave Jaeger, Betty Pope. Please also keep in your prayers the men and women serving in the United States Military. This month from our Schwenkfelder Prayer List we uplift Olivet Schwenkfelder Church, and all those still being affected by the most recent natural disasters.

January Youth Birthdays

Happy Birthday to...

Lily Hoffman (1/04), Ian Ross (1/05), LJ (Jason) Morasco (1/14),
Dillon Reinert (1/15), Johanna Kinsler (1/25)

Youth Sunday School

December 31st – No Youth Sunday school

January 7th – Regular classes resume

January 21st– Combined Youth Sunday school - Winter Rally

Installation of Officers

Next Sunday, January 7, 2018, during the worship service, we will have the installation of all new officers. Please greet and congratulate the new officers at the reception in the Adult Sunday School Classroom after the installation.

Help Needed for the Boy Scouts in Puerto Rico

Please help the Boy Scouts in Puerto Rico, whose camp was flooded and damaged by Hurricane Maria. Whitney Leh's Venture Crew, in the Hawk Mountain Council, is collecting items from other Venture Crews for Scouts in Puerto Rico. These items include Nalgene water bottles, microfiber towels, head lamps, propane lamps, and propane camp stoves (minus the propane tanks). The Crew anticipates sending several boxes of items to Puerto Rico and Whitney is asking if Palm would help with funds to purchase one camp stove, one lamp, and also cover the shipping costs (approx. \$300.00). Please consider donating funds to this cause to help the Scouts in Puerto Rico rebuild their camp. Funds should be earmarked "Puerto Rico Boy Scouts" and will be managed/disbursed through the Mission Board. Thank you for helping these Scouts in Puerto Rico.

Donation of Flower Vases

The Deacons are looking for donations of flower vases. They are needed for altar flowers, for when they are delivered to someone who is sick or shut-in. You can give your donated vase to one of the Deacons, or you can drop it off in the office.

Wind, Flood & Fire: Disaster Response

UCC Disaster Ministries has expanded the long-term recovery work for those recovering from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico along with those in need from the Wildfires in California. These efforts mean providing community support for holistic recovery, repairing house and home for families and children and restoring dignity for the most vulnerable who have lost everything in the wake of these catastrophic events. You may contribute to support Harvey relief and recovery efforts by clicking on the 'Donate' link to make a secure online donation at <http://www.ucc.org/disaster>. Gifts may also be made by indicating "Disaster Relief" in the 'Other' area of your Giving Envelopes; gifts will be forwarded to Wider Church Ministries by way of the Conference (PSEC).

Relay for Life

Palm's Relay for Life Committee thanks everyone who participated in our Christmas season fundraising projects. Through your generosity, hope continues to light the way for so many whose lives have been touched by cancer. Many thanks also to Pastor Nick for raising our awareness and inspiring us to continue the fight through our gifts to the American Cancer Society. This Christmas Eve a record 275 luminary candles lined the church's driveways and many hats, scarves and mittens for Open Link decorated our Christmas tree. The following are individuals whose names did not appear in our December 24th worship folder due to a technical problem. We recognize them here, and pray that the luminaries glowing in their memory on Christmas Eve have served as a symbol of hope for all.

In Memory of

Nan Weidner
Herman G. Weiss
Sandy Williams

George Windish
Beverly Wohlbach
Leon D. Wohlbach
Allan & Marguerite Woodward
Lawrence J. Yokl, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Yokl, Sr.
Ralph & Minnie Zwicker

Donated by

Leon F. Wohlbach
Ed & Kathy Bieler
Barbara & Gerry Colvin
& Family
Lee Schultz
Leon F. Wohlbach
Leon F. Wohlbach
Carol & David Woodward
Patti Yokl
Patti Yokl
Eugene Dolloff

Ladies' Aid Epiphany Party & Monthly Meeting

The Ladies' Aid Epiphany Party will be held on January 9, 2018 at 12:00 noon beginning with a covered dish luncheon. Please note the date change from our usual meeting schedule. Along with a variety of many delicious foods, we will be collecting monetary donations for Open Link. This event is open to all so please make plans to join us! (And don't forget to bring something yummy to share!) *Monthly Ladies' Aid business meeting will follow the luncheon.*

Christmas Fund

For 116 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. As one of the four Special Mission Offerings of the UCC, congregations have the opportunity to reach out in kindheartedness to those who have faithfully served the Church and are now facing unexpected financial needs. These gifts enable the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance to provide, on behalf of the whole Church, Supplementation of Small Annuities, Retiree Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gifts to those in need. This year's Theme is *Shepherding the Light*, and your support will help continue these ministries of light and love. The recipients of these gifts have faithfully served the church and now, in their time of need, we can be the church to them. We invite and encourage you to shepherd God's light and support this year's appeal.

Disaster Assistance Services Center for Hurricane Victims Now Open in Philadelphia

3 Great Loves....Love of Neighbor Opportunity for PSEC Churches!

Is your church looking for a great opportunity to be part of 3 Great Loves ...Love of Neighbor? Perhaps your church is also still wanting to assist those who suffered loss in this summer's hurricanes. If so, we have the answer! The Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management, in cooperation with the PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the Southeast PA Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SEPA VOAD) has opened a Disaster Assistance Services Center in the city to help those displaced by recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. Local, state, federal and non-profit partners are working together to provide information on available services for individuals displaced from the recent hurricanes. As of last count, 135 families, representing 280 individuals have visited the DASC for assistance. Evacuees can register for FEMA assistance, medical assistance, emergency food stamps, unemployment assistance at the center. In addition, evacuees can also obtain career services, medical and behavioral health evaluation and referrals. At the request of SEPA VOAD the PSEC is getting more involved. The conference has been asked to take the lead on this special mission. The UCC Disaster Ministries has issued a grant to the PSEC in support of this ministry however additional funds are required. As you can imagine the needs are many: housing, food, transportation, medical assistance, just to name a few. Your support of this cause can be sent to the Conference office. Please mark your check DASC. Each day we ask God to keep the world safe. When disasters occur, it is nice to know there is a way to help! No gift is too small!

Annual Report Submissions

It's that time of year again. Well, Christmas and New Year's, sure, but I mean Annual Report time. So, to all department heads, committee chairs, and church leaders, I humbly request that you submit any and all information to be included in the Annual Report by January 9, 2018. If possible, please email your information to the church office. And if you have any questions, please direct those inquiries to Joanne Luz.

Altar Flowers and Bulletins

The Deacons would like to thank the members of Palm for sponsoring bulletins and real flowers throughout 2017! Everyone who did sponsor, please remember that bulletin sponsorships are \$15, flower sponsorships for 2017 were \$50, and the flowers are yours to keep after the service. The new 2018 charts are in the hallway outside of the office, and for this year the Deacons are giving people a new opportunity for sponsorship. In 2018, you will have the option of sponsoring *one* arrangement, *or both* arrangements. The cost of one arrangement is \$25, and the cost of sponsoring both arrangements is \$50. So if you would like to sponsor one arrangement, you need only sign up on one chart, but if you'd like to sponsor both arrangements, you will need to sign up on both charts for that particular Sunday. Or if you choose, you may sponsor one arrangement on one Sunday by signing up on one chart, and sponsor a separate arrangement on a completely different Sunday by signing-up on the other chart. If you have any questions, please speak to one of the Deacons. Thanks!

Redner's 1% Save-A-Tape Rebate Program

Recently we have been notified by Redner's that they will no longer honor register receipts that have the bottom part cut off. To qualify for the 1% Save-A-Tape Refund Program, the register tape must be the *entire tape*. Also, they want *no magic marker* used on the tapes. *Entire tapes* dated within the last three years will qualify for the rebate. Thank you for your cooperation.

Did You Know...?

This is where we list items of interest to members and visitors. If you have any items to add, please call or email Dan Ferry in the church office. Thank you.

Did You Know...?

- LARGE PRINT bulletins are available from an usher. LARGE PRINT Bibles are also available for use during worship services, located on the table to the left between the front and back sections of pews.
- Listening devices are available for those who would like them. Please see an usher to assist you.
- A fully accessible restroom is located in the hallway, across from the office. A baby changing table is there, also.
- There are greeting cards on the podium as you enter the sanctuary. Anyone is invited to sign – you don't need to be a member of the congregation to add your name to the well wishes.
- Donations of greeting cards to this project are welcomed and needed, especially Get Well and Sympathy cards. Please see Nancy Hoffman with your donations, or place them on the podium shelf.
- There are two yellow and green bins at the back of the parking lot for recycling your office paper and newspaper. The church benefits from these collections, along with helping the environment.

**UNITED
CHURCH
OF CHRIST****Communitas**

PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100, Pottstown, PA 19464
484-949-8774

December 31, 2017

“ Hitting the Reset Button”

Years ago, when my boys were very young, like most youngsters, they loved to play video games. Often, they would play complicated games which only had a certain number of “lives” before you were “dead” and the game was over. So, one day my eldest is playing, things are not going so well, he has made a few mistakes in the game and he is down to just a few lives. Very simply and calmly, he hits a single button, resets the whole game, and just like that, he starts over with a new life. But what’s even better, with the new life he now has the experience of having already traveled this path so he knows what pitfalls to avoid and where he can find help.

This got me to thinking about what it means to be a Believer around the New Year. **The New Year provides each of us with an opportunity to “hit the reset button.”** You can begin again. And, even better, now you know what pitfalls to avoid and where you can go for help. I have learned this lesson from the brave people who are in recovery at my church. One day at a time, they hit reset, and try to do it a little better the next time. You made some mistakes last year? Who didn’t! Go into the New Year by hitting the reset button and allow the Lord to do something new in and with your life!

“But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.” Ephesians 2:4-5

-Rev. Cean R. James

Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development

**“May the spirit of Christmas be with you
throughout the New Year!”**

**The staff at the
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference office.**



Left to right: Susan Creswell, Rev. Cean James, Rev. Sharon Morris,
Brea Rarick, Tammie Wisniewski, Rev. Bill Worley, Donna Daloisio

NOTE: Important Date

“Books of the PSEC will close on January 16, 2018.
All OCWM contributions for 2017 must be
in our office by that date or they will be
counted towards 2018 contributions.”

This Week at PALM SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

Sunday, December 31

9:00am Adult Sunday School

10:15am Sunday Worship Service

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

Monday, January 1, 2018

Happy New Year!

11:00am Board of Music Ministry Meeting

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

7:00pm Boy Scouts - Troop Meeting

7:00pm Girl Scouts Senior/Ambassador Troop 72134

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

6:00pm Junior Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:30pm Senior Bell Choir Rehearsal

7:30pm Senior Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 4, 2018

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

1:30pm Staff Meeting

7:00pm Deacon's Meeting

Friday, January 5, 2018

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

Saturday, January 6, 2018

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

Sunday, January 7, 2018

9:00am Sunday School

10:15am Epiphany Sunday – Installation of Officers

11:30am Reception for New Officers

12:00pm Daily Time of Prayer Wherever You Are

PALM SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

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Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

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Serving You at PALM SCHWENKFELDER CHURCH

Ministers: All Church Members

Pastor: Rev. Nicholas Pence

Director of Music: Ed Bieler

Junior Bells: Beth Croll

Senior Bells: Joanne and David Luz

Organist: Peg Jacob

Church Administrator: J. Daniel Ferry

Youth Director: Barbara Master

Sexton: Kevin Master 484 – 358 – 1684

Greeter: Joan Pusey

Ushers: Gregg Hoffman, Glenn Hoffman, Scott Kriebel, Matthew Wright

Prayer Chain: Nancy Hoffman

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