

Word of Hope

Mount Hope United Methodist Church

December 2011



Pastor McGill Writes:

Dear Church Family,

I feel a deep concern this year that we don't make Christmas just another holiday. I am very serious about making Christmas a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Not every person sees Christmas as the birth of Christ. Much of the commercialized, materialized world seems to have turned Easter into a bunny suit, Thanksgiving into a turkey, and the birth of our Lord and Savior into a man in a red suit, causing us to buy gifts we sometimes cannot afford based solely on the commercials programmed into us every 15 to 30 minutes on television.

Many charge themselves into near-bankruptcy or retreat into a sorrowful seclusion away from those we need and love. Statistics have recorded Christmas as the loneliest time of the year. And that is what I believe to be one of the devil's greatest counterfeits. Jesus Christ came into the world to be the Friend that sticks closer than a brother, the Husband to the widow, the Father to the orphan, the Comforter, beloved Savior, and King of kings and Lord of lords.

Yet, as the years pass, with the rise of the New Age movement and secular humanism, the world draws deeper and deeper into self and further away from our Savior and Messiah Jesus Christ. When I think of all the partying, celebrating, drinking, and commercialization – and in some areas of our own government a display of a nativity scene where baby Jesus is against the law in government buildings, and where schools are forced to refer to this time as the

“winter holiday” and not allowed to use the term Christmas – my heart is hurting at the act of reducing the birth of my Savior to a holiday instead of a holy day.

It is because of the birth of Jesus that we have our hope. Without the miracle birth of Jesus, how could He have ever grown up to be a man who would wear a crown of thorns, take the stripes upon His back for our healing, and be crucified on a cruel cross? He died for the sins of the world only to be resurrected on the third day and proclaim, “Because I live, you shall live also” (John 14:19). I feel a burning in my soul to tell you that **WE MUST PUT CHRIST BACK IN CHRISTMAS!** After all, it *is* His Birthday.

I want to ask you a very soul-searching question this Christmas. Who is Jesus to you? Is He just a reason to have a holiday, or is He your Lord and Savior? Is He just a baby in a manger, or is He your Messiah? Stop listening to what the devil and his crowd say about God and the Savior. Keep your eyes on the Star, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Christmas, I want you to do three things for God. First, begin by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior if you have not already done so. Just pray this prayer along with me now:

Father, I come to You right now in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I ask You to forgive me and wash me of all my sins. Release me from satan's hold on my life and set me free. Forgive me of the past. I turn

my back on my sins and ask You to help me not to do them again. I take Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and I will not bow to the devil again. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Second, if for some reason you are not presently attending church, make a decision now to become an active worshiping member praising your Lord. You need to experience who Jesus is and what He has done for you. He loves You!

Third, get into worshipful giving and receiving, spiritually and scripturally, as God's Word teaches. Learn the biblical principles of sowing and reaping as you sow your giving into God's kingdom.

I want you to understand that I am not against families getting together and giving to one another this Christmas. Suzanne, Steve and I get together every year. We exchange gifts. We read the story of the birth of Jesus in Matthew or Luke and reminisce while giving thanks to God for the year of blessing He has given us. But what I don't want to ever happen in my life, or yours, is that Christ is buried in the lights and tinsel and commotion of the holiday, and removed from the center of our Christmas celebration. May we always keep Christ at the center of Christmas and Jesus the Reason for the season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pastor McGill

A Christmas Prayer

I was in the store the other day and was caught by surprise when all of the Christmas decorations were up and the sales had already begun. The question that immediately came to mind was, "Have we lost the real reason for the season?" The following is a prayer for each of us in the church family to keep the heart of CHRISTmas, Jesus Christ – Savior.

A PRAYER FOR YOU

Father, during this Christmas season, I pray for all in the Church Family as well as our Friends. Let them know that the real Christmas

Gift is Jesus Himself – that the real "Joy to the world" is making Jesus Christ the Lord of their lives and taking that Gift to the rest of the world.

Help them to keep Jesus in their Christmas and not let worldly things overshadow the true reason for the season.

I pray especially for those who are under stress and pressure at this time of year. In the Name of Jesus, I rebuke the stress and lies of the devil from their minds. Lord, I'm asking You to give them revelation of how much You love and care for them.

Let them know that they can trust You with their lives. Help them to realize that true peace comes from being joined to You.

Father, let Your peace flow into them and do a work in them and encourage their hearts today.

Lord, I pray that this will be the best Christmas they have ever had – that they experience Your presence with the most joy, the most peace, the most good, the most blessing, the most healing!

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Pastor McGill

Sanctuary Christmas Tree

This year's Sanctuary Christmas Tree will support our "Mount Hope Bread of Life Ministry." We've selected this name for our local monthly food and clothing outreach. Although Angel Food Ministries officially came to an

end, we'll continue a similar ministry to the community with our own program, chaired by Sue Keeley.

Ornaments on the tree will depict either food items needed or dollar amounts that may be contributed. Monetary gifts may be

given in increments as small as \$1 to as large as \$100 (take more than one!) and will be received from November 27th through December 18th. Please stop by the display table in Habbersett Hall on those Sundays for more information.

Living Nativity

Mount Hope's Living Nativity Christmas Program is Sunday December 11th. There will be one performance which will start at 6:30 pm. Young people from Mount Hope's youth group and Sunday

school will be involved. Following the nativity, families are invited to Habbersett Hall for a time of crafts and activities as well as refreshments. This is a tremendous opportunity to invite family and

friends to share in the joy of the season. Please plan as a family to attend this yearly time of the celebration of the birth of the Christ child. Pastor Ealy and

Christmas Poinsettias

The wonderful Christmas Season is upon us and we'll be decorating the Sanctuary with the beautiful poinsettia tree. You may

have poinsettia plants placed in the Sanctuary in honor or in memory of loved ones. The potted plants will have 6-8 blooms and the cost is

\$8.00 per plant. To order, contact Laura Taylor at 610-517-0610 or taylors120@comcast.net.

Christmas Cantata

We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go. Hebrews 6:18

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that His HOPE is a sure and steadfast anchor for our souls. We exist between two epiphanies: His advent, that first light of His appearing, the beautiful day of mercy when God allowed man to walk with His Son; and His second advent, that day when we will see His glory revealed. We live

now in the power of this story and gain strength as we anticipate HIS return.

Come and rejoice with us as we present "***Hope is Born! Emmanuel!***" by Jay Rouse and Randy Vader, on Sunday, December 18 at the 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. Come and worship the newborn King and embrace this Truth:

*Hope is not lost!
Hope is not out of reach!
Hope is not gone!
HOPE IS BORN!
EMMANUEL*

This year we are adding a new 'dimension' to the cantata. You won't want to miss it!

"The Gift Inside"

Come and worship with special music at the 9:30 contemporary service, too: "***The Gift Inside***" celebrated by the 930 Praise Band under the direction of Donna Kelly. That's Sunday, December 18th.

Mount Hope Bread of Life Food Ministry

New name, same concept-

Helping Those In Need And Sharing The Awesome Love Of Jesus Christ With Our Community

AngelFood Ministries is no longer available, but Mount Hope Church would like to continue to help those families in need. This monthly ministry has been an extension of our food pantry and, in addition to the usual pantry staples, was a way to provide some fresh foods such as bread, eggs, produce and a few types of refrigerated and frozen foods. The ministry also provided gently used clothing to those who needed that help also. One of the best parts of this ministry was that we had the opportunity to come to know those in our community and

show and tell them the love of Jesus Christ.

Moving forward, in order to continue this ministry, we are seeking donations of food from local businesses and working on possibly creating our own food box or boxes. We are also going to rename the monthly food ministry, "Mount Hope Bread of Life Ministry."

If you know of a business that might help us or feel led to volunteer and be a part of this exciting ministry, please just come and help or call me (Sue Keeley) @ 610-485-1272.

The dates of Mount Hope BREAD OF LIFE MINISTRY are November 19 and December 17 from 7:45 -11 am.

We distribute food and clothing from 9-10:30 am. Your loving help would be welcome on both those dates in Habbersett Hall.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PRAYERS FOR BREAD OF LIFE MINISTRY!!

Sue and the Team

Education

Mount Hope Children's Center

Our December Bible Verse: "*Unto us a Child is born.*" Isaiah 9:6

We always look forward to this month, but it is always a whirlwind. In December the children enjoy learning about the birth of our Savior and listen to Rev. McGill's special Christmas story in our beautifully decorated Sanctuary. Also they make gifts for their families and end the year with a special Christmas show, also in our Sanctuary.

This month the Center for the Blind will be giving our children eye exams. We could schedule only two

partial days with them, as they are suffering from budget cuts.

Our Fruit of the Spirit is, appropriately, "patience" – something we try hard to teach the children (and keep ourselves!).

This year we will again combine Chapel and our Christmas shows. They will take place in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, December 20th at 11:00 a.m. and on Wednesday, the 21st at 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

In November we held a very successful food drive for the Mount Hope Bread of Life Ministry. Also, the children filled twenty-eight boxes

to contribute to Operation Christmas Child (special thanks to Joni Ertwine, who filled more than her share). We will have a "Giving Tree" this year to donate to our Food Pantry, instead of our usual hat and mitten tree. We make sure the children learn the important lesson of giving and sharing, the true meaning of Christmas. All of us at the Children's Center wish all of you a joyous, safe, and very merry Christmas and a Christ-centered New Year!

Kris Leary
Director

Confirmation 2012

This year's Confirmation Class will begin with a parents' meeting on Sunday January 8th at

9:30am. Any young person 13 years old or older who is interested in this faith exploration is encouraged to

attend. Please call the office or Pastor Phil to sign up, space is limited.

New Year's Eve Family Game Night

December 31st from 6-9pm in Habbersett Hall, Mount Hope Church will be having a time of family fun, games and food.

Various group and individual activities are planned. The evening is free of charge, so come welcome in the New Year, have some pizza,

enjoy some laughs all in the name of Christian fellowship.

Pastor Phil

May We Have Your E-Mail Address?

We're continuing to reduce our office costs by e-mailing a link to the on-line *Word of Hope* each month. Sending you a link saves the church

on postage, paper and copier charges. If you don't mind reading the newsletter electronically, please email us at office@mthope.org and each

month we'll send you the link on our web site.

The Church Family

Birth:

Michael W. Clinger, October 28, 2011, son of Michael and Elizabeth Clinger

Marriage:

Nicole Donaberger to *Matthew Nelson* on October 8

Death:

Anita DePrinzio, November 5

We have no known addresses for the following members, nor any recent attendance or contributions. Therefore we will be withdrawing them from membership in 2012. If you are in contact with any of these members and know that they would want to retain their connection with Mount Hope Church, please ask them

Transfer of Membership:

Gil and Mary Brientnall to Bethlehem UMC, Thornton

Withdrawn Membership:

Barrie Kintner

Changes of Address:

Rob, Crystal, Ocean and Natalie Verrall
Norfolk VA 23505-1366

to call the church office or Rev. McGill without delay.

Terri Westenberger, Connie Werner, Sherry Voorhees, Nicole Stant, Russell Replogle, Donald and Brenda Porter, Susan O'Neill, Daniel, Patricia and Kevin Mozzoni, Heather Mozzoni, John Michael, Carah McKenzie, Sean McAdams,

Ron & Amber Fulginiti Duquette,

Downingtown PA 19335

Eric, Carrie & Nathan Ross,
Marcus Hook PA 19061





Elizabeth Kerstetter,
West Chester PA 19382

John and Anita Harper, Sr
New Holland PA 17557

Mamie Maxwell, Dawn Marshall, Michael Mack, John Kirk, Ben and Julia King, Douglas and Karen King, Brentley and Karen Johnston, Susan Jirak, Donna Imre, Deborah Highfield, Patricia Heer, Betty Gottier, Patrick Carney, Jason Bucci, Holly Astheimer, Scott Ashton, Todd Andrews

December 2011 Calendar of Events

This Update Printed: Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Every Sunday: Worship at 8:15 and 11:00 a.m. Traditional 9:30 a.m. Family, Praise Band</p> <p>Community Events: Sundays—6 pm, Cub Den 4 (104) Mondays—7 p.m., Boy Scout Trp 292 (FH) Tuesdays—8 p.m. AA (FH)</p>				<p>1 7:00 PM Emmaus mtg (L) 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir (216)</p>	<p>2 6:30 PM Forshey/Sweeney Wed Reh (S) 8:00 PM Bells of Hope/Comm Christmas concert (Neumann)</p>	<p>3 8:00 AM HIS Ministry (HH) 4:00 PM Forshey/Sweeney Wed (S)</p>
<p>4 Advent 2nd Sunday Communion Blood Pressure Screening (HH) 7:45 AM Library open 8:45 AM HSTS Choir (104) 2:00 PM Cantata Reh (S) 6:00 PM YF PULSE (HH, 6)</p>	<p>5 7:15 PM Ark BS (Owsley) 7:30 PM Selah Bible Study</p>	<p>6 7:00 PM Baptism Sem (L) 7:00 PM Kelli Girls BS (6) 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl (Digging) 7:30 PM 20's Bible Study (Halls)</p>	<p>7 9:30 AM Staff Mtg (L) 6:30 PM 930 Reh (S) 7:00 PM Muddy Boots Bible Study (6) 7:00 PM Trustees (L) 7:00 PM Bells of Hope (101)</p>	<p>8 11:00 AM Busy Beavers (Kit) 4:00 PM WOH Dinner (Oie) 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir (216)</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 8:00 AM HIS Min Rain Date (HH) 1:00 PM Rappold Christmas Party (HH) 4:00 PM CoWed class Christmas Party (HH)</p>
<p>11 Advent 3rd Sunday Baptism 7:45 AM Library open 8:45 AM HSTS Choir (104) 6:00 PM YF PULSE (HH, 6) 6:30 PM Living Nativity (S, HH)</p> 	<p>12 7:00 PM Men's Fellowship (L) 7:30 PM Fuzzie Slippers Girls Bbl Styd (6)</p>	<p>13 9:00 AM MHCC Cookie Bake (Kit) 7:00 PM Ad Bd (HH)</p>	<p>14 9:00 AM MHCC Cookie Bake (Kit) 9:30 AM Staff Mtg (L) 6:30 PM Bells of Hope (Retrmt hm) 6:30 PM 930 Reh (S) 7:00 PM Muddy Boots Bible Study (6)</p>	<p>15 9:15 AM MHCC Christmas Story (S) 7:00 PM Cantata Reh (S)</p>	<p>16 9:15 AM MHCC Christmas Story (S)</p>	<p>17 9:00 AM Cantata Dress Reh. (S)</p>
<p>18 Advent 4th Sunday Cantata 7:45 AM Library open 8:00 AM Worship (Cantata) 8:45 AM HSTS Choir (104) 6:00 PM YF PULSE (HH, 6)</p>	<p>19 7:30 PM Selah Bible Study</p>	<p>20 11:00 AM MHCC Christmas Program (S) 6:00 PM Worship Com (L, S) 7:00 PM Circle of Friends Bbl Styd (104) 7:00 PM Kelli Girls BS (6) 7:00 PM SPR (L) 7:30 PM 20's Bible Study (Halls)</p>	<p>21 8:30 AM WOH Mailing (HH) 9:30 AM Staff Mtg (L) 11:00 AM MHCC Christmas Program (S) 6:30 PM 930 Reh (S) 7:00 PM Muddy Boots Bible Study (6) 7:00 PM Bells of Hope (101)</p>	<p>22 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir (216)</p>	<p>23</p> 	<p>24 Christmas Eve 6:30 PM Family Service 8:30 PM Candlelight Carol Service (S) 11:00 PM Candlelight Communion (S)</p>
<p>25 Christmas No Sunday School 10:30 AM One Worship Service today</p> 	<p>26 Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 9:30 AM Staff Mtg (L) 6:30 PM 930 Reh (S) 7:00 PM Bells of Hope (101)</p>	<p>29 7:00 PM Sanctuary Choir (216)</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve 6:00 PM Family Game Night (HH)</p> 
<p>MHCC Closed</p>						