

**Please note that our online newsletter is modified from our print edition. If you would like to receive our unmodified newsletter, please contact the church office at 717-944-6181 or [eumch.org/contact-us](http://eumch.org/contact-us)**



# *The Messenger*

## *Evangelical United Methodist Church*

157 East Water Street, Middletown, PA 17057

717.944.6181 [www.eumch.org](http://www.eumch.org)

### From the Pastor's Pen



We often idealize the Christmas story. Christmas cards depict neat, warm scenes of Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. They are in a proper barn/stable/crèche with plenty of room and animals respectfully looking at them from a distance. A popular Christmas hymn (the only hymn parishioners have threatened me if I did not have us sing it), "Silent Night," gives the impression of quietness and serenity.

We all know that barns are not clean. The best understanding of the Christmas story, in Luke, is the hosts of Jesus (probably not an innkeeper but a local family with connections to Joseph) had him stay in the animal part of the house because there was no room for guests in the non-animal part. If Jesus was in a confined space with Mary, and Joseph, and animals, it may have looked a little different from the Christmas cards or nativity sets. Babies entering the world can be more chaotic than peaceful. Crying often interrupts the silence.

Our sermon on Christmas Eve will explore what it meant for Jesus to go from the realms of glory to the backwaters of Judah and be born. Divinity meeting humanity and all the messiness that entails. Being born to experience all the pain, suffering, hurt, and even death as a human. Why would Jesus do this?

Please join us at one of our Christmas Eve services. Consider inviting someone to worship with you. We will have a 6 PM service and an 11 PM service. Both services will end with "Silent Night" with candlelight. Our 11 PM service will also experience Holy Communion. I pray you have a blessed season of Advent and I look forward to worshipping with you on Christmas Eve.





December 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent)  
Focus: Birth Pains  
Scripture: Mark 13: 24-37

December 10 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent)  
Focus: Comfort My People  
Scripture: Isaiah 40: 1-11

December 17 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent)  
Focus: the work of God  
Scripture: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

December 24 (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent)  
Focus: Saying yes to God/Being open)  
Scripture Luke 1: 26-38

December 24 (Christmas Eve)  
Focus: Getting dirty to share God's love  
Scripture: Luke 2: 1-20

December 31 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas)  
Focus: Looking for Salvation  
Scripture: Luke 2: 22-40

**Signs and Wonders: a beginner's guide for the Miracles of Jesus**  
**Pastor's Sunday School Class January/February**

9 AM on Zoom or in Room 3 in the basement of the educational wing

In *Signs and Wonders: A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine explores selected miracles of Jesus in historical and theological context. For each miracle, she discusses not only how past witnesses would have understood the events, but also how today's readers can draw meaning from Jesus's words and actions.<sup>1</sup>

Participants should pick up a copy of Amy-Jill Levine *Signs and Wonders*. If you would like the church to order a copy of the book for you, please contact the church office ([office@eumch.org](mailto:office@eumch.org) or 717-944-6181). The cost of the book is \$13. If the cost of the book will be a problem, please talk to Pastor Andrew. If you would like to order through the church, please let us know by Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Schedule**

January 7- Chapter 1-“Take up your pallet and walk”: On the Role of Caregivers (Mark 2: 1-12)

January 14-Chapter 2-Stilling the Storm: Attending to Nature (Mark 4: 35-41)

January 21-Chapter 3-The Feeding of the Five Thousand (or More): The Centrality of Bread (Luke 9: 10-17)

January 28-Chapter 4-A Bleeding Woman and a Dead Girl: The Importance of Women's Bodies (Matthew 9: 18-26)

February 4-Chapter 5-A Two-Stage Miracle: Seeing Again (Mark 8:22-26)

February 11-Chapter 6-The Raising of Lazarus: Taking Death Seriously (John 11: 1-44)

**Contact office for Zoom Information**

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<sup>1</sup> From book's promotional materials

# Community DINNER

## COMMUNITY DINNER REPORT

Financial report for November 18th dinner - We served a total of 89 guests, with a profit of \$912.08 which has been distributed as follows:

\$100.00 to the church for Supplies

\$203.02 share to church

\$203.02 share to church for capital improvement

\$203.02 share to Dinner fund

\$203.02 share to Sunshine Fund

We will continue community dinners in 2024, starting in February on a Saturday evening from 4:30-6:00 p.m. The price of tickets are \$12 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12 will remain the same.

## Schedule for 2024 -

February 24 – Italian trio - lasagna, chicken parmesan, & meatballs - Matt & Brynne Barth, chefs

March 16 – Roast turkey – Lori Miller, chef

April 20 – Roast turkey – Lori Miller, chef

May 18 – Baked chicken- – Pastor Andrew Burd-Harris, chef

The following information has been added to the schedule that we distribute to our guests each month - "Proceeds from our community dinners will be used for needs of the church, its members and residents of the community of Middletown, as well as for mission projects of the congregation. Thank you for your donation."

Enclosed with this newsletter is a small envelope. Remember the Magi who traveled so far to bring their gifts to our King. Let us also honor Him as best we can. Please prayerfully consider what you can contribute, Thank you.



### Looking for something different?

Come join our growing “Young and Young at Heart” Sunday School class. We have outgrown two rooms in the church, and now are in a larger area, in the Fellowship Hall beside the Zoom Room. We are having a breakfast every Sunday, and our lessons are being created to be shown on our large screen tv. One morning we even hand-cranked peach ice cream! It is more of a discussion class, where you can talk as little or as much as you wish. We discuss what is on our hearts, have a lesson, sometimes play a game, and think outside of the box to plan missions and implement our ideas to help witness to our community in non-traditional ways. We would love for you to join us Sundays at 9. Maybe we can outgrow the Fellowship Hall???!





Evangelical United Methodist Church

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Middletown, PA 17057-1888

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