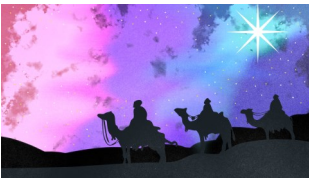




# THE MUSTARD SEED



## The Coming Light...

Spiritually and physically, we are on a profound journey during this time of year. In December, as we approached the Winter Solstice, our days shortened, the amount of (sun)light diminished, and we dwelt in approaching darkness. This time of year, can be hard for us. The literal darkness brings darker moods for some. Some live with Seasonal Affective Disorder struggling profoundly with the waning light. However, it affects us, in one way or another, the fading light touched each of us.

The good news is that we are never left in that diminished light. After December 21<sup>st</sup>, the light starts coming back. As we gathered to celebrate Christmas, our days grew longer. The earth proclaimed its resistance to allowing the darkness to completely take over. Spiritually and liturgically, we are preparing ourselves for this coming light. First, we prepare ourselves in the light of Christmas. The warm glow of the incarnation illuminates our world. It was by design that the ancient Church leaders placed Christmas just a few days after the Winter Solstice because they saw in the patterns of nature a powerful metaphor for the Light of the World, Jesus, being born as flesh and blood.

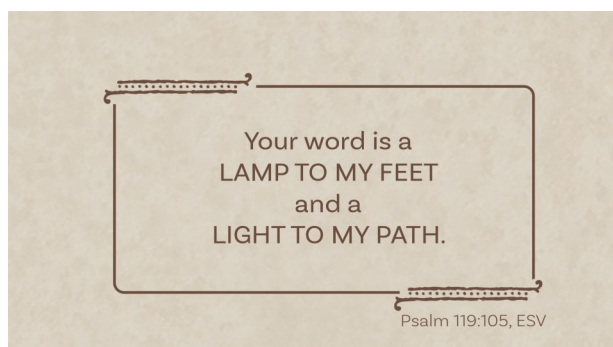
This celebration of light continues into Epiphany. When we celebrate the visit of the Magi to the manger, we often think that it is the end of something as Epiphany closes our Christmas Season. Rather, Epiphany is the beginning of something as we celebrate a whole season of Epiphany. The Epiphany Season is a testimony to the growing light in the world. Spiritually in this time, we are continuing to proclaim Jesus as light of the world as testified to by the Star of Bethlehem. Epiphany is an opportunity for us to proclaim and bring light to our world.

This Christmas and Epiphany Season may we each endeavor, in our own ways, to proclaim and bring light into the world. As the shadows still dwell; as violence and power struggles still occur, we as Christians, as the Church, should reflect Christ's light out into the world. We can bring the light of Christ into people's lives, not just for a season, but as a regular practice of discipleship. If we endeavor to be people of kindness, grace, and justice in an angry, unforgiving me-first world, then we begin to not just talk about the Gospel but to live the Gospel. Our calling in this time of approaching light is to be people who endeavor to bring Jesus, the Light of the World, into the world.

May each of us be blessed by Christ's Light. May our hearts and souls be illuminated by the power of the incarnation. May the light of the Star of Bethlehem guide us to our spiritual home found in a manger. May our lives reflect the ways Christ's light has been made known us and the whole world!

Peace,

Pastor Matt



## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



**Children's Sunday School Hiatus** – Our Christian Education Team values our youngest learners and continues to seek the best way to help them learn about God and our favorite Bible stories. During January and February, we will be taking a brief break from the model of offering Sunday School twice a month in order to focus on having conversations with our families about what the best time and frequency is for offering faith formation opportunities. **Please note**, the Teen Class will continue to meet throughout January and February every other Sunday starting January 12.



**The Caring Cupboard** would like to thank you for your gifts of November & December totaling \$485. These months marked by the bounty, blessings, and joyful spirit of the season are perhaps the favorite time of the year at The Caring Cupboard because they are reminded over and over again the tremendous generosity of the community.

**The Lebanon Rescue Mission** thanks you for blessing them with your gift of \$130 to support their ministries.

**Lancaster Theological Seminary** thanks you for your recent gift of \$100. Thank you for your support in guiding their students in their journeys of faith and ministry.

**The United Church of Christ Homes** would like to thank you for your recent gift of \$340 which was placed into their Benevolent Fund. Your generosity will touch lives of real people and enhance their mission to provide compassionate care and services.

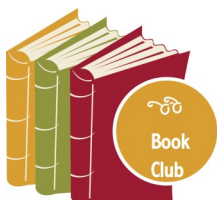


**Sip & Chat Sundays** at 10:00am in the West Narthex with a light snack, hot beverage, and last minute conversations are a fun way to mingle prior to the service. Whether a bag of donut holes or a basket of home baked goodies, please consider hosting. There's a sign up sheet on the Bell Tower bulletin board. Contact Michelle Alger with any questions. (717)269-5070. Thanks!



**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & LUNCHEON** will be held **January 26, 2025** immediately after worship.

For the meal portion of the Annual Meeting, pork & beef BBQ sandwiches along with a variety of cold salads/sides will be provided. Anyone wishing to participate in a "Potluck of Desserts" is welcome to drop off their goodies in the kitchen before church.



**The Book Club will meet Monday, January 27 at 7 p.m.** to discuss "The House is on Fire" by Rachel Beanland. The February book is "Tastes Like War" by Grace Cho. If you have any questions, please contact Carin Kaag. Her e-mail is [cas207@yahoo.com](mailto:cas207@yahoo.com)



Sunday	January 5	Sip & Chat 10 a.m. Epiphany Sunday, Family Worship with Communion, Installation of Council 10:30 a.m.
Monday	January 6	Profile Committee 5:30 p.m.
Thursday	January 9	Creation Care Team Meeting 7 p.m. Hybrid
Sunday	January 12	Sip & Chat 10 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for Youth 6th –12th grade
Monday	January 13	Council 7 p.m. Choir Room/Hybrid
Tuesday	January 14	Christian Education Committee 1 p.m.
Sunday	January 19	Sip & Chat 10 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m.
Thursday	January 23	Moyer Fund 9:30 place TBD
Friday	January 24	Private Party 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fellowship Hall
Saturday	January 25	Private Party 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fellowship Hall
Sunday	January 26	Sip & Chat 10 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m. Annual Congregational Meeting & Luncheon After Worship
Tuesday	January 28	PACC 7 p.m. First United Methodist

*All Worship Services will also be livestreamed on YouTube.*



## THE MUSTARD SEED

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# WORSHIP SCRIPTURES

**January 5, 2025**

**Epiphany**

Jerimiah 31:7-14

Psalms 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1: (1-9), 10-18

**January 12, 2025**

**First Sunday after Epiphany**

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalms 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**January 19, 2025**

**Second Sunday after Epiphany**

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 36:5-10

I Corinthians 2:1-11

John 2:1-11

**January 26, 2025**

**Third Sunday after Epiphany**

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalms 119

I Corinthians 12:13-31a

Luke 4:14-21

**February 2, 2025**

**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

Jerimiah 1:4-10

Psalms 71:1—6

I Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

**February 9, 2025**

**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalms 138

I Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

**February 16, 2025**

**Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**

Jerimiah 17:5-10

Psalms 1

I Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 6:17-26

**February 23, 2025**

**Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**

Genesis 45:3-11

Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40

I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

## New Year's blessing

The eighth day of Christmas,

the eighth day of Creation,

the Next New Day,

New Year's Day.

May every day be a new year's day for you:

a chance to forgive and be forgiven,

to start again.

May you take courage to begin anew. ...

As you let go of the year past,

may you ... in your free fall find yourself held  
by an eternal love that has come ages to be with you,

and will carry you all the way to the end. ...

Every day may you trust your belovedness,  
your freedom from having to prove yourself,  
and receive the grace that is given to you.

May this year be a year of grace and hope.



—Steve Garnaas-Holmes, [unfoldinglight.net](http://unfoldinglight.net)





## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Gordon Wirth  
 2 Kelly Hein  
 5 Brittany Devine  
 5 Griffin Weidler  
 7 Cynthia Steger  
 7 Florence Umberger  
 7 Wilson Frew  
 8 Christy Umberger  
 13 Robert Smith  
 18 Jared Cooper  
 19 Jeannie Wirth  
 21 Brenda Davy  
 21 Gretchen Monahan  
 21 Kelsey Smith  
 24 Scott Aungst  
 25 Kevin Flory  
 31 Lisa Smith



## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

4 Tyler Comarnitsky  
 9 William McNamara  
 18 Judy Doll  
 22 John Moyer  
 23 Michelle Alger  
 23 Ashley Gottier  
 24 Steven Garrett  
 25 Wally Shepler  
 25 Linda Patrick

## Giving your best



Like the Magi, we can respond with our best gifts — our industry, our devotion, our very lives. We disciples are Christ's tangible presence in the world. That same Child whose light brought such joy to the Magi now, through us, offers his mercy to every person.

Through us, every day, Christ feeds multitudes; he heals, teaches and guides countless people. Through individual volunteers and major institutions, through simple acts of kindness or worldwide coordinated efforts, the world can encounter, through the Christian community, the enduring, tangible presence of Christ.

—Michael Simone

## SALEM COLLECTIONS -

**The Caring Cupboard** is a community food pantry, that has grown into a community necessity, that currently serves over 350 families living primarily in the Palmyra and Annville-Cleona School Districts. Products to be given to the Caring Cupboard may be placed on the designated shelves found at the end of the northwest hallway of Salem Church.

**Pop Tab Collection Program (Matt Waller) Ronald McDonald House.** The collection of aluminum beverage tabs began in 1996. The aluminum tabs are sold to a local recycling company and their proceeds help with daily operating expenses at the Ronald McDonald House. The generous amount from the tabs collected has been very beneficial to the House and the families they serve. They are averaging \$1,000 monthly just from these tiny tabs. You can help raise money by pulling tabs from any aluminum container. Pop Tabs may be placed in the designated box on the shelf above the coat rack in the bell tower entrance.

**Redner's Cash Register Receipts (Cindy Steger)** By using the Save-A-Tape card you picked up at Customer Service Desk each time you purchase merchandise at Redner's Warehouse Markets, your receipt will be designated as a Save-A-Tape customer receipt. When you come to Salem Church, place your **entire register/sales receipt (DO NOT CUT!)** in the designated box on the shelf above the coat rack in the bell tower entrance. Salem Church will receive a check for 1% of the total amount of tapes submitted, excluding items controlled by the government, such as tax, milk and tobacco products.

**Clothing Recycling** Old clothing and material that are too worn to use can be recycled. If possible, take to an H&M Store (they give you a coupon for each bag!), otherwise put it in the box in the west narthex and we'll take it for you. Thank you!

**Writing Tool Recycling** You can recycle old writing tools – crayons, markers, pens, and pencils. Staples Store will recycle these items as well as many other items (check their website!). Feel free to take to a Staples or place in the "Crayola marker" collection tube on the windowsill in the west narthex. Thank you!

## MLK on what really matters



Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.”

Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”