** Baptist Tabernacle **

**Tabernacle Tidings**

**Baptist Tabernacle**

**63 Division Street**

**Wilkes-Barre, PA 18706**

**570 823-3083**

Website: www.wbtabernacle.com

 **December 2020**

Holiday Greetings to you and yours.

As we prepare for the Holiday Season this year, we are mindful of the COVID -19 pandemic and increased concerns and needs in our local communities and around the world. Members of Baptist Tabernacle have always been generous in support of missions. Particularly at Christmas, the season of giving, we look for ways to share our blessings with those who are less fortunate.

**Wishing all a Merry Christmas and Healthy, Happy New Year !!!**

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Message from the pastor: 

 **EMMANUEL**

**Matthew 1:22-23**

**All this took place what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Emmanuel” (which means “God with us”).**

The Advent Season is here! It is the time of year that we prepare and celebrate the coming and birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! When Emmanuel was born, the world was forever changed for the better. The angels sang, the shepherds sought to be witnesses of this marvelous sight and the Magi travelled from the east to worship the child and offer Him gifts that were fit for the KING OF KINGS. Even in the midst of COVID-19, we Christians still have Hope, Peace, Joy and Love to spread all over the world one person at a time. Merry Christmas!

 **Some Advent Traditions**

**The Advent Wreath**While Baptists are not considered a “liturgical” \* denomination, some of us do share many traditions with other branches of the Christian church, especially around holidays such as Christmas. One that Baptist Tabernacle has adopted is the ***Advent wreath***. An Advent wreath is usually shaped as an endless circle to symbolize the eternity of God and His infinite love. Within the wreath are candles that generally represent the four weeks of the Advent season as well as the light of God coming into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. On Sundays in Advent, we light candles to focus on the Christian concepts of Hope (week one), Peace (week two), Joy (week three) and Love (week four). One candle is lit on the first Sunday, two on the second Sunday, and so on, symbolizing the progression of anticipation, preparation, joy and hope that surrounded Christ’s birth. The candles for Hope, Peace and Love are purple, the liturgical color of penance and royalty. The Joy candle is pink, the liturgical color for joy. It reminds us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, and we rejoice that we have reached the midpoint of Advent. Some wreaths, like ours, feature an additional white candle in the middle that is lit on Christmas Eve in honor of the Christ Child, the light of the world.

\*In which the rites, ceremonies, texts, prayers and sacraments are arranged in set forms by a higher church authority (e.g., a bishop).

**Advent Carols**Advent comes from the Latin word “coming” and it is a season of anticipation and waiting. Beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of the Christ. The first two weeks especially emphasize the theme of painful longing and waiting and the reasons that led to His birth. Those themes are expressed in such carols as “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” and “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Such hymns are also a prophetic witness to His coming. Because of this reflective mood, many of these carols sound somber and are written in a minor musical key.

We often complain about how stores put up Christmas decorations “right after Halloween” and our ears in the mall (at least they were in The Before Times!) are constantly bombarded with the sounds of Christmas carols. Frankly, by the time Christmas arrives, we are tired of these songs and exhausted after this period of frantic commercial and social activity. Early Christians, in contrast, spent these weeks in a subdued spirit of penitence, expectation and anticipation. So as we move through these weeks and we sing some of these less popular Advent carols during our services, let them add some anticipation to your Advent season and reduce the fatigue often associated with December. Please have an Advent of quiet excitement and of waiting!

**Women on a Mission: White Cross**

Last year American Baptist Women celebrated 100 years of reaching out to people in need through their White Cross program. After 100 years, we are facing a world that is very different than when White Cross was founded, and the special challenges of 2020 and the Covid19 pandemic have made those differences even more apparent.

In the past Women on a Mission would be given a “wish list” of needed items to be sent to a neighborhood Christian Center in the United States. For the past few years we enjoyed shopping for items requested by the Crossroads Community Baptist Church which has a special outreach to refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma). And we sent a check to the White Cross General Fund so our regional American Baptist Women officers could disperse the money where they felt the need was greatest among overseas missions.

Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, Women on a Mission has not had any fund raising projects this year but the group recently voted to send $100 each to the Crossroads Community Baptist Church in Erie and to the Rankin Christian Center near Pittsburgh. They are again sending $100 to the White Cross General Fund.

If anyone wishes to contribute to this effort, please give your donation to Sandy Bonavina or any other member of Women on a Mission. We extend our deepest gratitude for your part in this legacy of 100 years of White Cross ministries!

**Church Business:**

**Individual Board Meetings: Board of Deacons; Board of Education; and Board of Trustees will meet immediately following the service on the first Sunday of the month (December 6th).**

**Official Board Meeting: The Official Board will meet on Thursday, December 10th at 6 PM at the church. (Note it was decided to change the usual meeting day from Wednesday to Thursday to encourage better attendance).**

**Updates from the Official Board meeting on November 12th:**

* We are happy to have Valerie Black providing consistent pulpit supply.
	+ Plans were made to decorate the church sanctuary for the for the Advent season on November 22nd .
	+ Nominating and Budget Committees were defined**.**
	+ Plans were made for the Annual Church Business meeting which will be held immediately following the service on December 13th.

**Annual Church Business Meeting December 13th (immediately following worship service):**

**All church members are encouraged to attend this important meeting which includes election of new officers. Please note that openings exist on all church boards and anyone willing to volunteer is encouraged to contact Bea Fell, or a member of the board. Participating on church boards increases personal growth and is an opportunity to be involved in assuring maintenance and planning for future growth of Baptist Tabernacle. Please consider becoming a more active member. Your participation is greatly appreciated.**

For those who are still not comfortable meeting in person, arrangements have been made to participate remotely (Ron Shandorf has set up a ZOOM meeting).

* + **Anyone interested in participating via ZOOM should contact Ron via email at** **Ron@shandorf.com** **and he will send you a link to join the meeting.**

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**Missions:** The mission offering collection for November and December is the **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.** Please include a donation for this Offering with your usual contributions.

The retired ministers and missionaries offering is an opportunity to support the American Baptist Churches USA as they highlight the service and ongoing impact current and retired ministers and missionaries make in the community especially during these unprecedented times. The theme for this year is *Hope for Today, Hope for Tomorrow,* and focuses on the strength and dedication of ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA.

**The Mitten Tree** is another annual tradition at Baptist Tabernacle and we are again collecting hats; scarves and mittens or gloves to share with our local communities to help those in need this winter.

**Local Food Bank:**

Suggested items: December - pasta

 pasta sauce

 rice

 dried beans

**\*\*\***

**If anyone needs pastoral support, please feel free to call or email Pastor Valerie**

**Phone: 570 877-2975**

**Email:** **pastorWBTabernacle@outlook.com**

**Please remember our members who are sick or shut-in by sending greeting cards.**

Note: Mrs. Ebert is now residing at Hampton House.

Arline Ebert

Hampton House Nursing Home

Unit C Bed 12

1548 San Souci Parkway

Hanover Township, PA 18706

**Birthdays and Anniversaries:** (Sorry I missed printing for November)

**November: December:**

 5 Paula DelPrete & Paul Durko (anniv.) 2 Kristen Finnegan

10 Janet Cussatt 9 Juday Tudgay

13 Marcus Gudaitis 20 Earl & Erma Kohl (anniv.)

18 Noah Cussatt 31 William Finnegan

27 Sharon Myers

28 Linda Shandorf

30 Matthew Cannavale

**We continue to comply with Covid Guidelines for our Sunday services and feel we have been able to maintain a safe environment and encourage you to join us for in-person worship. Sunday School is still on hold. Advent services include Nov. 29; Dec 6,13, 20 and Christmas eve service 12/24.**

**If you decide not to attend in person, here are the web addresses for church services you can live stream.**

**First Baptist Church of Lansdale (Lansdale, PA) - with former youth pastor Chris Hamilton**

**https://www.fbcl.com/live-streaming/**

**National United Methodist Church (Washington, DC)**

**http://nationalchurch.org/live-stream**

**Shavertown United Methodist Church (Shavertown, PA)**

**https://www.shavertownumc.com/online-worship/**

**Newsletter Communication:** If you have email, please let me know so we can curtail our postage cost. (Linda@shandorf.com ; phone: 484 767-2566}.