



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



MILFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

206 East Ann Street Milford PA 18337

Rev. Jennifer Lovallo, Pastor

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DECEMBER 2023

Dear Friends,

Years ago my husband and I journeyed to the Holy Land with Bishop Devadhar and a group of clergy colleagues and their spouses. It was an educational tour designed to inform our ministries and inspire our preaching. We visited key sites in Jesus' life, and at each stop one of us would read scripture appropriate to the setting. When we visited Shepherds' Field in Bethlehem I was the volunteer reader. As I opened the Bible to the familiar passage, the words struck me profoundly and I read the verses as if for the first time, changing one particular word:

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the(se) fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. (Luke 2:8-9)

I was standing in the doorway to the natural cave where those same shepherds kept their flock safe from the elements. In the limestone ceiling a star had been cut out and a small light within was the only illumination in the darkness. I looked out of the doorway across the open fields and felt the gravity of the moment. From within that dark cave it was easy to imagine how the shepherds might have felt looking upon the terrifying glory of those angels.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)

One of the many things I learned that day from our Christian Palestinian guide was that the shepherds in that part of Bethlehem were responsible for raising and taking care of the lambs that were destined to be sacrificed at the Temple in Jerusalem. The flock they were keeping watch over weren't just any sheep. They were the young male lambs, pure and without blemish. The good news of Jesus' birth was first delivered to shepherds responsible for the sacrificial lambs. They were perhaps uniquely qualified to appreciate the significance of the Messiah, the Lamb of God, born to take away the sins of the world.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

I pray that as you journey toward Bethlehem this December, you will find time to read the Christmas story as if for the first time. Marvel over the miracle of the Creator God born into human flesh as an infant in a stable; tremble at the glory of the Lord, then run in haste to see the child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. Keep watch over the lamb of God, and share the good news of salvation.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them. (Luke 2:20)

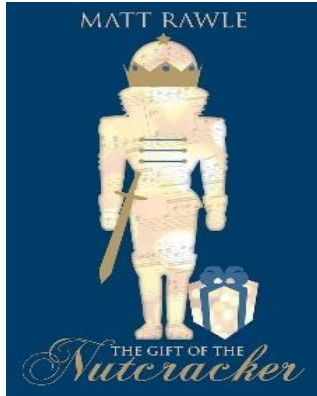
Blessings for this Holy Season,

Pastor Jenn

WAYS TO WORSHIP

DECEMBER WORSHIP

Join us for 10:00 am Worship on Sundays, in-person, or livestreaming on our Facebook page.



Join us for our Advent Worship Series, *“The Gift of The Nutcracker”*, as we explore this Christmas classic through the lens of faith. Discover how this iconic tale can help us understand God’s greatest gift of the Christ child, and of the kingdom Christ came to build.

Much like Clara, we are all caught in an Advent season, pondering a most extraordinary gift.

Sunday, December 3rd – 1st Sunday of Advent/ Holy Communion
Hanging of the Greens/ *“Waiting for Christmas”*

Sunday, December 10th – 2nd Sunday of Advent/ *“A Godfather’s Love”*

Sunday, December 17th – 3rd Sunday of Advent/ *“Changing Perspective”*
4:00 pm – Blue Christmas Service – Join us for this intimate worship providing a time of sober reflection in the midst of a holly jolly season

Sunday, December 24th
10:00 am – 4th Sunday of Advent/ *“The Greatest Gift”*

7:00 pm – Christmas Eve – Candlelight Service with Choir and Bells

Sunday, December 31st – Service of Lessons and Carols/ Noisy Offering

BLUE CHRISTMAS



BLUE CHRISTMAS

Join us Sunday, **December 17th, 4:00 PM**
for a worship service of remembrance and grief.

IMPORTANT CHURCH INFORMATION

WORSHIP Sundays at 10AM—All Welcome!

CHILD CARE AVAILABLE *(NURSERY LOCATED AT END OF HALL IN EDUCATION WING)*

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS 10:15 IN EDUCATION WING

(CHILDREN WILL BE ESCORTED TO CLASS AFTER CHILDREN'S MESSAGE)

- **CHOIR REHEARSAL: Sunday at 8:30 AM** in the Sanctuary
- **BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL: Sunday at 11:30 AM** in Sanctuary
- **CRAFTY LADIES:** No meetings until further notice—WINTER BREAK

MEETING SCHEDULE and MEETING ZOOM LINK: bit.ly/MUMCZoom

- **Tuesday, December 12, 6:30PM—Church Council Meeting (Hybrid)**
- **Thursday, December 14, 6:30PM—RMT**
- **Sunday, December 17, 4:00PM—Blue Christmas Service**
- **Tuesday, December 19, 6:00PM—Finance Committee Meeting (Online)**
- **Friday, December 29, 6:15PM—Ecumenical Food Pantry**
- **Friday, January 5, 6:00-8:00PM—Family Game Night—Bring your family, friends and favorite game! We will be having Pizza so please RSVP to the Church office by Thursday, January 4 (*Gluten-free option will be available.)**

NOVEMBER /DECEMBER UPPER ROOMS AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX



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www.milfordmethodists.org -- milfordmethodists@gmail.com

Follow us on Instagram: [@milfordmethodists](https://www.instagram.com/milfordmethodists)
and Facebook: www.facebook.com/MilfordUMC

WAYS TO SUPPORT

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Our Stewardship Campaign is underway and our church needs your prayers. Last month, we reported it has been a difficult year from a finance perspective in contrast with our growing our ministries and outreach despite an operational budget deficit.

Last week, we received an email from the conference about church's in similar financial positions and the possibility of losing a full-time pastor position. While we do not want to alarm the congregation, we need to be transparent in our communication. We will be discussing this issue at our next finance and ad council meetings and ask for your prayers and consideration to step up your support during this year's stewardship campaign.

Pledges and other offerings only cover less than 75 % of our expenses and expenses have gone up given the current inflationary economic environment. Our building is being used for many groups for outreach and we would like to be able to continue our various missions and ministry.

We continue to look for ideas but more importantly people to step forward to chair fund raising events. Our location for fund raising is ideal and there are numerous ideas for events and fellowship activities that need fostering by a separate individual and/or group of individuals who can serve but are not already involved with a volunteer position in the administration of our church. Please pray on this to discern if you are called to fit that role and be assured you will have the help and support of the church leadership!

We can only continue to grow our community outreach with the full support of the congregation with your prayers, presence, gifts, services and witness.

Below is an interesting biblical explanation on the concept of a "Tithe" under the new covenant that focuses on giving from the heart rather than under pressure from old testament teachings.

[Does the Bible say Christians need to tithe? - BibleQuestions.com](https://www.biblequestions.com/does-the-bible-say-christians-need-to-tithe/)



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Simply the right way to fundraise



WAYS TO SUPPORT



MILFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS HONORED TO, ONCE AGAIN, PROVIDE CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR YOUNGSTERS UNDER THE CARE OF PIKE COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH. The agency is a strong community partner and we welcome the opportunity to make Christmas just a bit more joyful for kids who often live in challenging circumstances.

The Angel Tree is back up in the narthex, loaded with gift tags for you to take! Each tag provides information about the name, age and gift request of the young person. Be creative and do your best! Follow the directions on the tag and tape it onto your unwrapped gift before returning it to the church.

And, **ONLINE CONGREGATION.....WE SEE YOU!** And, we need your involvement, too. You are invited to send gift cards or cash donations to the church at 206 East Ann Street, Milford, PA, 18337. **Both unwrapped gifts and gift cards should be delivered to the church no later than Sunday, December 17.** Milford Methodists are a generous people. Let's do this!

POINSETTIAS



Once again, it's time to beautify our Sanctuary for the holidays by ordering poinsettias in honor or memory of loved ones. Plants cost \$15.00 each. Please call your order into office by this Thursday—Dec. 7 NOON

Plants will be available to take home after the last service on Christmas Eve.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

VOLUNTEER FOR THE FOOD PANTRY:

NEXT TURN * Friday, December 29 6:15-7:45 PM

The Ecumenical Food Pantry is located at 321 Fifth Street. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, or would like to be added to our text messaging group, please email church office at milfordmethodists@gmail.com

BABY SHOWER for MARY & JOSEPH

Baby Shower for Mary and Joseph

You are cordially invited to attend the fourth annual Baby Shower for Mary and Joseph on Epiphany Sunday, January 7, 2024 during our regular 10:00 am service. Once again we will celebrate the Magi who brought gifts to Mary and Joseph to honor Baby Jesus. All donations will be delivered to the Baby Blessings Pantry at Dingmans UMC.

Baby Blessings is a vital ministry in the Pike County community, providing children's items to those in need from young families to custodial grandparents. According to Aly Solch, BBP Coordinator, the following items are especially needed:

Diapers (Size 4 and up), wipes, diaper rash cream, gas drops, sleepers, nail clippers, socks.

*However, **ALL** baby items will be gladly received.*

During the January 8th worship service, we will have an opportunity to bring our gifts up to the altar and shower both the Holy Family and our neighbors in need with love. Although we will not receive a Communion Offering on this day, cash donations are welcomed!

For more information about Baby Blessings Pantry, contact our friends at DFUMC at (570) 828-2288. Thank you for your support!





December 24th – Christmas Eve

10:00 AM—Family Service

7:00 PM—Candlelight Worship with Choir & Bells

Sunday, December 31st

10:00 am— A Service of Lessons & Carols

To worship remotely, go to www.facebook.com/MilfordUMC

Milford UMC
206 East Ann Street
Milford, PA 18337



*The Church office will be closed
Monday, December 25 thru
Monday, January 1*



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