



Allegheny Evangelical

Lutheran Church

1327 Alleghenyville Rd.

Mohnton, PA 19540

610-777-2520

www.aelc.org

Church Staff

Pastor

The Rev. Zach Labagh

pastor zach@aelc.org

610-777-2520

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AELC News

News from and around
Allegheny Evangelical
Lutheran Church



DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

“Come, to know the love of God: Go, to make it known.”

Grace and peace to you from God our creator and Jesus the infant Christ that we await. Advent is the beginning of the church year and the time of preparation and anticipation of the birth of Jesus. It is a time of renewal and hopeful waiting. However, it's hard to wait, especially when you're excited but uncertain. I cannot imagine the anxiety that Mary and Joseph felt as they prepared for this special and sacred birth. Do you think they had a birth plan? Did they expect to birth the baby at their home? I doubt they expected to have to travel to Bethlehem and to find no one to welcome them. I doubt they were thrilled to have to sleep with the animals, or give birth around them. This humble location, this humble beginning for the Word of God made flesh that comes to dwell among us, is a reminder of God's call for us to be humble.



As we hear of shortages, of needs of workers, of struggling through the wake of the pandemic, how do you see this story differently this year? Are you overwhelmed already by the tasks that present themselves for this Advent Season? Do we respond as Mary full of humbleness and grace: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.” Or do we struggle with what is going on

around us and seek to respond as Joseph wanting to go back to the way it was and 'let go' of what is put in front of us: "Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'"



Perhaps it's somewhere in between? Trusting God but uncertain about what the future has in store? I think that is where the joy and wonder of this season can help us. While we may be uncertain, unsure, angry, full of anxiety, God is at work. God's word made flesh is coming into the world, to dwell among us. To dwell within us, full of grace and truth. What is God doing in this Advent season? Where do you see God dwelling during this season of waiting and anticipation? Perhaps in asking these questions we will see God some place we least expect? In a family who has traveled far, who are weary and exhausted? In a family rejoicing in the birth of a child? A family resting in the only place they can find, a stable? A community rejoicing in the promise anew of God's Word made flesh that comes to save us all in humbleness. A Blessed Advent and Christmas season to you all as we wait with wonder, hope and joy.

Peace and Hope in the coming Christ child.

Pastor Zach



Adult Faith Formation:
Glenn Beyer will be leading Adult Faith Formation focusing on the 1st Corinthians. He is leading on **Dec 5, 12, 19!!!**



4:30 pm Music (Outside)
5:00 pm Family Candlelight Service (Outside)
9:00 pm Traditional Candlelight Service (Inside)



November 28 began our season of Advent, a time of reflection, prayer and waiting for our Lord and Savior. There is a display of Advent Devotions in the Lobby for all ages: Adults, Families, Teens and Children.



POINSETTIA'S FOR CHRISTMAS!!

A sign-up sheet is on the table in the lobby to order your poinsettia for Christmas. Cost is \$11.00/each. The deadline to order is **December 12**.

Contact Sandy Fluck if you have questions... 610-334-3175



The **Hanging of the Greens Service** was held on Sunday, **November 28** at the combined worship service at 10:30 am.

The **Advent Workshop** was held on Sunday, **November 28** at 9:00 am prior to the Hanging of the Greens service.



SEASONS MUSIC!!

A Celtic Advent Service will be led by "Season's Music" from Harrisburg. Mary Kate and her siblings will use the harp, dulcimer, and cello to play beautiful Christmas music at the 10:30 am combined worship service on Sunday, **December 5**.



Angel Tree

More information to come. Contact Kristen Kelly at youthd@aelc.org with questions.

Faith Formation

The children were busy making very colorful Stained Glass Soldier Silhouette gifts that were given to our veterans by Pastor Zach on November 14 during worship services.



On November 21 during the 10:30 a.m. service, the children sang a special song accompanied by Bill Moczydowski. Their voices are so sweet and full of joy!

We kicked off our Advent Challenge on November 28 to raise funds for the ELCA World Hunger God's Global Barnyard. Each class selected an animal to raise funds for purchase. All donations are due no later than **January 9, 2022**. Teachers and students are eager to learn about the ways the ELCA helps those around the world.

During the Advent Workshop on Sunday, November 28, the children participated in several fun activities. Being mindful of the importance and impact of serving, they made items to give to others.



Our PreK-K class has been learning about very faithful servants of God in the Old Testament. Anna Albera is assisting Logan Forrer with a paper crown during the lesson about Queen Esther.

A Children's Message from Pastor Zach is offered biweekly on our Facebook page and website. Tune in on: **December 5** and **December 19**.

Youth & Mission



Senior High Faith Formation is back! We have already engaged in some good discussions and are making plans to redecorate our space! We look forward to having any Sr High youth from 9th grade and up join us this month. We meet at 9:30 on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month in the Sr High room (upstairs - if you go up the staircase across from CAT Class it is the first room on the left). Please note we will not meet on January 2.

We look forward to seeing you on **December 5** and **December 19** at 9:30am. If you have any questions, please contact Janine Labagh or Allison Eshleman.



Congratulations again to our 4 newest confirm- ands!

Welcome Jacob, Derek, Emelia, Gianna and Autumn! AELC is blessed to have you!

CAT Class

There will be no CAT Class on Sunday, December 26 or Sunday January 2. We will resume class on Sunday, **January 9**!



Our next youth group meeting will be Sunday, **December 19**!

INTERWOVEN



Our next Interwoven will take place on Sunday, **December 12**! Pack dinner and join us here at 5pm! We will be cutting, baking, and decorating Christmas sugar cookies to spread cheer in our community!



World Hunger Auction

Thank you all for your continued excitement and support of our World Hunger Auction and Raffle event. After many conversations and prayerful consideration, the planning committee has made the decision to postpone the event for the time being. We recognize the importance of this event and want to see it take place safely and in celebratory manner. We recognize that it is our call as a committee to serve our community and keep all members of that community safe and healthy. At this point, the best way we feel to do that is to wait until our Covid-19 numbers are significantly lower. Donations will continue to be received so we are ready to host our event as soon as we can safely come together in celebration and maybe a little bit of competition.

We on the World Hunger Auction and Raffle planning committee continue to thank you for your support and excitement in preparation for our event!

We are still looking for donations for our World Hunger Event. We are looking for baskets to include in our raffle opportunities as well as larger items for our silent auction. If you are willing or interested in donating in any way, please contact Kristen Kelly at youthd@aelc.org. Get creative! If you have a talent you'd like to donate (such as baking a cake, or offering your babysitting services) we'd love to showcase and auction those off as well!



December Fair Trade

We are ready and stocked at the Fair Trade stand to fulfill some yummy Christmas wishes! Coffees, teas, chocolate bars, olive oil, cocoa, and more, make great Christmas, thank you, and hostess gifts for those we like to show a little extra appreciation for over the holiday season.

These feel good products spread joy in both the giving and receiving. When gift recipients learn what Fair Trade products are, they feel good about receiving such a thoughtful and mutually beneficial gift. If you would like to include information with a gift, explaining what Fair Trade is, and how coffee, teas, and chocolates are curated for Equal Exchange, please help yourself to the brochures available for handout at the stand, or contact Janine or Connie with any questions. You can also email us at fairtrade@aelc.org

Merry Christmas, and as always, thank you for your support in this ministry.

Christmas at Joanna

On Friday evening, **December 3** at 7:00 pm, AELC families and friends are invited to tell the story of our Savior's birth while we sing Christmas carols at Joanna Furnace, Route 10, Morgantown. We will meet at the stage area next to the campfire pit at 6:30 pm. PLEASE wear warm clothes and bring a flashlight. A program will be provided for you which will include the words to the Christmas carols. All ages are welcome!



If you would like to participate, you need to sign up in advance! There is a "Sign Up" sheet in the lobby next to a collage which describes in detail "Christmas at Joanna!" Your name will be given to the staff at Christmas at Joanna, and as a result, you will receive free admission! No masks are required since we are outside for the entire pro-

Christmas at the Highlands

On Sunday, **December 12**, members of AELC will be driving to the Highlands at Wyomissing, 2000 Cambridge Avenue, Wyomissing. We will share a Christmas Program of handbell and piano music plus a carol sing for the residents at the Highlands. Our handbell choir will play "Amazing Grace" and "Carol of the Bells." Our AELC members will sing Christmas carols, and our musical director, Annie, will provide beautiful piano music as well.

Please sign up in the lobby if you are willing to participate in Christmas at the Highlands! We



need to be at the main entrance to the Highlands by 12:30. The Highland's program director will meet us and escort us to a room for our program which will begin at 1:00.

Merry Christmas to the residents at The Highlands from our AELC congregation!

Christmas for Our Home Worshippers

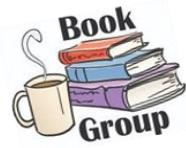
We remember our Home Worshippers at Christmas. This year, all of our church members are invited to meet in the church on Sunday, **December 5** at 9:00 am to sing Christmas carols and read the Bible story of our Savior's birth. Our singing and message will be recorded so that every home worshippers can see it online.

In addition to our video recording, gift baskets will be made for each home worshiper. On Sunday, November 28 during our Day of Serving, a gift basket will be assembled and cards will be signed for each person on our list. We are asking members of the congregation to then deliver the cards and gift baskets to each residence. A sign-up sheet for these deliveries will be posted on the bulletin board in the lobby.

We will remember our Home Worshippers at Christmas with a video recording of Christmas carols and a special delivery of a gift basket and card for each one! Merry Christmas to our Home Worshipers from our AELC congregation!

AELC Book Club

We are on “Christmas Break” but we aren’t stopping reading! While we won’t be meeting for the month of December, we will be reading “Good Neighbors” by Sarah Langan. We will meet on **January 6** at 6:30pm to discuss “Good Neighbors” and pick our next read!



Women's Group



Women's group will meet on **Tuesday, December 14** at 5:30pm! We will be led by Kim Pieffer and play My Favorite Things. Participants are invited to bring 1-3 items (each item should be \$5 or less), that represent their favorite things! We will then explain what these items represent and gift them to other individuals participating. Sign up for the potluck in the lobby or let Kristen know what you plan to bring!

FOLLOW US!

Our youth have their own Instagram page. Follow us to see all the great things we do - such as Mission Trips, Interwoven, CAT class and more! Our handle is @aelc_youth! Check out all the amazing things we are doing through our faith!



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED



Among the many things that have changed at AELC in the past year, needing lay readers for our services has not!

Until now, we have been recording the readings to be streamed during each service. In light of the changing circumstances, which reflect the increased number of vaccinated members of our church community, we feel we can now allow for Lay Readers to have a choice of either pre-recording the readings or providing the readings in person, onsite. Please use the link below to sign up for the reading you wish to do and make your choice of presentation - pre-recorded or on-site. Or you can contact Gaye Dougherty at gayedougherty@gmail.com or 610-507-4562 or contact Dee Constable at office@aelc.org, 610-777-2520.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0F45ABAD2EA1F58-worship>



(left to right)

Knicki Knickerbocker, Steven, Dustin Armstrong



Steven Armstrong
at his Eagle
Court of Honor
Presentation



Jillian Michel with mother,
Jeannine at Governor Mifflin
band senior night



A special **Thank You** to Ron Fluck for the beautiful crosses he handmade for the Confirmands. They were so appreciative of the gift.



Financial Info

Treasurer's General Fund Report

GENERAL FUND UPDATE			
	Total Attendance	General Fund Income	Weekly Budgetary Need
Oct 17, 2021	85	\$4862	\$5418
Oct 24, 2021	101	\$4344	\$5418
Oct 31, 2021	115	\$2874	\$5418
Nov 7, 2021	101	\$6175	\$5418
Nov 14, 2021	121	\$2261	\$5418
Total	523	\$20,516	\$27,090

*Attendance includes online and onsite figures.

In October our income exceeded expenses by about \$300. For the first ten months of 2021 expenses exceeded income by \$24,000.

Expenses are \$2400 under budget, but income is \$26,500 under budget.

The HVAC fund balance which is not part of the General Fund is sufficient to cover payments through January. At the end of January, we will have completed two years of our three year loan from the Berks County Community Foundation.

Also, outside of the budget, members continue to contribute to the Debt Reduction Fund and at the end of October we had \$6500 to use for our next principal paydown.



Atonement Lutheran Church (5 Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing 19610) is going to try a "Blue Christmas" service for the first time this year. It is called a "Longest Night Service," and it will be held on Tuesday, **December 21** at 7:00 p.m. in the main worship space (not Lundin Hall). Candle lighting, prayers, and readings focused around remembering those we have lost. No sermon or communion. Open to all in the community. Masks are required for all.

Braver Angels: Introductions to Common Ground

This month, the Adult Sunday Faith Formation class wrapped up a 5 week book study of, "The World is About to Turn" by Rick Rouse and Paul O. Ingram. We also had a final Google Meet with one of the authors. Rick Rouse brought up the grassroots organization, Braver Angels.

Following the General Election of 2016, the most divisive election in US History, Better Angels had a main goal of depolarizing the current political landscape in our country. They held their first RED/BLUE conference in December 2016. Their main purpose was to get both sides of political supporters to sit down at the same table and find the commonalities that we have as Americans. In early 2020, they changed their name to Braver Angels:

Braver Angels was inspired by the words of Abraham Lincoln, who not only called on Americans to summon the "better angels" of our nature — but called on us to find the courage needed to pursue a more perfect union, "with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right." (<https://braverangels.org/our-story/>)

Braver Angels has a suggested donation of \$12/yr (\$1 month) to join their conversations. I have recently found a lot of my current online conversations through social media will devolve quickly into name calling and meme sharing not based on real facts. Too many times, I have found myself saying the same thing over and over, while no one on either side is listening to each other.

The day after I signed up, one of the co-founders reached out to me. David Lapp is originally from Lancaster County, and was excited to see I was ready to get the conversation started in our area. Braver Angels takes the political leanings of both sides of current issues that cause breakdowns in most online conversations. Initially, members are asked to participate in 1-on-1 dialogues centered around three core topics; Rural/Urban, Generational, or Racial Diversity. Participants are paired according to their political leanings of Red vs.Blue.

My first conversation was with a gentleman from Idaho. We set up an online meeting and had a 1-hour "Getting to know" each other conversation. The questions focus on listening to the other person tell their story. Braver Angels asked us to focus on listening to each other. Then, find the commonalities we share as Americans.

I would like to encourage everyone to visit BraverAngels.org. Their goals are to embrace the differences we have in this country. There are ways we can engage others without all the name calling and misinformation. Structured conversations reinforce the importance of listening to others and seeing their own issues with a new perspective. We can all work together to strengthen the bonds that make us Americans. We need to work together, to find a common ground that will build us up instead of tearing us apart.

Apollo Loose



AUDIO-VISUAL team

Can you turn up the volume on your car radio or your TV? Can you use your computer to access webpages? If you've answered yes to either of these, then do we have a role for you. The AV Team at AELC is currently looking for individuals to assist with worship on Sunday morning and for special services. They are a great group of people who control the sound and live internet feed during worship. They are looking for a few extra people to assist in their ministry. If you are interested, please reach out to Andy Zirkel. itteam@aelc.org

Can you turn up the volume on your car radio or your TV? Can you use your computer to access webpages? If you've answered yes to either of these, then



Altar Flowers

Ministry Opportunity

Sponsors Needed

Please check the sponsor chart for altar flowers in the lobby...there are many openings. Cost is \$43 for 2 altar vases & \$40 for a chancel arrangement. Contact Sandy Fluck at 610-334-3175



Redner's Tapes can now be dropped off in the church vestibule at your convenience. Please place them in the box on the table. Contact Susan Messner with any questions (610-777-7776).

Thank you!



Sponsors are needed!

Won't you please consider sponsoring the Sunday worship bulletin? There are many Sunday's available to sign up for. Cost—\$20.00 If you have any questions or wish to sponsor a week (or two), please contact Jo Verrill at jodaverrill@gmail.com.

Ronald McDonald House Can Tabs are now being collected again. Please drop them off in the container on the table in the vestibule any time at your convenience.

Thank you.



AELC Home Worshippers

Please keep these Home Worship members in your thoughts and prayers:

Molly Althouse, Ron Austin, Pastor Charles, Larry Craley, Pat Hiester, John Messner, Janet Orth, Paul Pray, Malcolm Reider

**Looking Ahead...**

Our next newsletter is the **January** issue. If you have content for the newsletter, please submit your articles by **December 15** to the church office via email at office@aelc.org or in Dee Constable's mailbox.

Newsletter 



SUNDAY, JANUARY 16
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE
10:30 AM COMBINED
WORSHIP SERVICE.
MEETING IS TO APPROVE THE
2022 BUDGET.

**AELC Prayer Ministry**

Recognizing the importance of prayer for our congregation and the world, AELC has a prayer ministry that communicates needs in various ways. We primarily communicate through a weekly email and listing prayers in the Sunday bulletin. We also have a closed Facebook group to share emergency requests and praises.

To receive the weekly email, send requests, updates or praises - please email Roxanne Loose at reign0827@hotmail.com or the church office at office@aelc.org. You may also call the church office to leave a request. If you would like to be a part of the Facebook group, please let Roxanne know so you can be added.

There is a Prayer Request box and slips in the lobby. Feel free to add requests this way; it will be checked weekly. When adding someone to the list, please make sure you have their permission.

Additionally, if you do not use email or social media and would like to be a part of this ministry, please leave your name and phone number with Roxanne or the office and we will communicate with you in a way that works for you!

POWER PACKS

Thank you all for your continued support as we continue to partner with Immanuel UCC and Grace Lutheran to provide Power Packs for the Governor Mifflin School District. We will continue to collect popcorn, crackers, and granola bars for the next distribution for the Christmas break. Please have your donations to AELC by Thursday, **December 16**.

HELP BOTH OUR CHURCH AND OUR PLANET AT THE SAME TIME

AELC is now using the Planet Green Recycling Program to collect used ink cartridges to send in to recycle and receive money back to be **used in support of the church's Mission Trip program**. A collection box is in the vestibule for dropping off your used ink cartridges for us to submit to Planet Green Recycling.

If you wish to mail them in yourself from home, please follow the steps below:

- Open the following link on your computer: <http://www.planetgreenrecycle.com/>
- Click on item 2 "Free USPS Label"
- Fill in label request

Your first & last name

Your email address

Organization Program Code: Enter 31821

Address – Enter Church Address: 1327 Alleghenyville Rd, Mohnton, PA 19540

Identify how many cartridges. **YOU MUST SEND AT LEAST 4**

- You will receive a prepaid label in your email to mail the cartridges
- Box up the cartridges, attach the label and drop off at post office

The church receives funds directly from Planet Green Recycling, \$1.00 for every cartridge (commonly used cartridges). **If you choose to mail in your cartridges yourself, it is very important to make sure to include the church's Organization Program Code (31821) so we receive the credit for the cartridges. No toner cartridges accepted.**

Thank you for your support of the AELC Mission Trip Program!

GROUNDS CLEAN-UP**MAINTENANCE BOOK**

The Property Committee has created a book for you to sign-up to clean a specific grounds area and to maintain on an on-going basis. Please look through the book on the table in the lobby and if you have an interest in keeping the grounds in good shape or just enjoy working outside, pick an area and sign your name. When you and your group want to do the clean-up/maintenance is whatever works best for you and your time schedule. If you have questions or concerns, please contact a member of the property committee.



Before 1767 the needs of the members of the Reformed, Lutheran and Mennonite Christian fellowships were met primarily by the union churches at Earlstown, which is now New Holland, Muddy Creek, Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading and the Bowmansville District of the Mennonite Church.

December Birthdays

3 Heidi Ramsbottom
 5 Olivia Yoder
 8 Lea Keith
 8 Mary Messner
 10 Tammy Taylor
 11 Clara Zirkel
 12 Sandy Dake
 13 Brandon Carl
 14 Michael Grim
 15 Beth Thomas
 16 Craig Scheetz
 17 Gary Coffey
 18 Ava Albera
 19 Ray Hill
 20 Nathaniel Klein
 21 Linda Oeffinger
 22 Tara Cylcewski
 23 Michael Prince
 24 Darryl Breniser
 25 Alissa Albera
 26 Brenda Baur
 27 Jacquelyn Hirneisen
 28 Annie Rose Tindall-Gibson
 29 David Beyer
 30 Courtney Kerschner
 31 Holly James
 32 Russ Relkin
 33 Norma Jean Rogers
 34 Robin Ream
 35 Meg Relkin
 36 Dennis Kintzer
 37 Gail Schrantz
 38 Audrey Rogers
 39 Jennifer Pacharis

**December Anniversaries**

1 Maxine & Bob Seidel (1962)



Welcome!!
We welcomed some
new members
at AELC this year.

Scott Laundermilch



Laraine Montgomery



and the Haupert Family, Gregg, Emelia and
 Stephanie



NOTICE

Please help our Safety and Property Committee by making sure **all** doors are **closed** and **locked** when you leave the building. Your continued help with this matter makes us and the church a safer place.

If there are any issues with the church property that need to be addressed contact Rod High first at 610-856-1386 or if no reply then contact Jim Spangler at 717-445-6537.

Thank you!



Ex-Officio	Pastor Zach Labagh
President	Joe Hickson
Vice President	John Thomas
Secretary	Tammy Taylor
Council	Greg Horton
Members	Ellie Loose
	Kimberley Peiffer
	Lynne Scheetz
	Gayle Tomasko
	Andrew Zirkel
Council Treasurer	Bill Baxter
Council Financial Secretary	Colette Price

**Men's Group**

Bible & Brew is taking a break until the spring, please look for monthly emails from Pastor Zach

**All services
on
Facebook
can be
found:**



on the church page <https://www.facebook.com/matthew44>
or on the church website <https://www.aelc.org/podcasts/media>

*Worship With Us***DECEMBER****Dec. 5**

9:00 am CAT Class/Faith Formation Classes
9:30 am Adult Faith Formation Class
9:30 am Sr. High Faith Formation Class
10:30 am Combined Worship—Seasons Music

Dec. 12 & 19

8:30 am Traditional Worship
9:00 am CAT Class/Faith Formation Classes
9:30 am Adult Faith Formation Class
9:30 am Sr. High Faith Formation Class(12/19)
10:30 am Praise Worship

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5:00 pm Family Candlelight Service—HC-
Outside (music to begin at 4:30 pm)
9:00 pm Traditional Candlelight Service—HC

Dec. 26

10:30 am Lessons & Carols Service
(no Faith Formation or CAT Classes)