

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR HILL

God's unexpected gift

I came across an article which describe some unexpected gifts people were given. One was a pair of air-conditioned shoes which have filters and micro fans built right into them. Another was an Ostrich Pillow. This napping pillow goes completely around a person's head and can help them get some sleep on a couch or even at a desk -"because, who doesn't love and need a good nap." A third was a toilet nightlight, which will provide much-needed guidance in the dead of night. Finally, there was a cat brush shaped like a tongue. This brush is held in your mouth, and you use it to bond with your kitty by pretending to lick it like a mother cat. By doing so, you are "communicating in their love language."

So, what were the people of Israel expecting during the rule of Emperor Augustus of Rome? They had no Christmas to celebrate, so they weren't looking for anyone to surprise them with an unusual gift. But, the people had hopes and dreams in their time of oppression, and some of these expectations were based on their Hebrew Scriptures.

So, what they get is a girl who's pregnant.

The prophet Isaiah had explained that "the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Such a prophecy was thrilling, because the name Immanuel means "God is with us," and the people of Israel were longing for God's presence and power. In the face of threats from foreign rulers, Isaiah was predicting that God was going to free them from oppression and bring peace to their land.

Ralph G. Hill, Pastor
Joanna C. Gragg, Assoc. Pastor
Camille Joseph, Admin
Jenny Leininger, Treasurer

*WORSHIP, LEARN, WITNESS SERVE,
SUPPORT*

Newsletter Deadlines

*The Monthly Happenings
@ the Mount deadline is
the 18th of each month.*

So, maybe the gift was a girl *with child*, who would bear the child, yet another gift — a child named Immanuel, a sign of God’s presence and power.

The people also knew Psalm 80, a prayer for the restoration of Israel. “Stir up your might and come to save us!” says this desperate appeal to God.

“Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!” (v. 2-3). The people of Israel heard their enemies laughing at them, and they sensed that their neighbors were looking down on them, so they cried to God, “Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself” (v. 17).

So perhaps the gift was a mighty messenger who would be God’s right-hand.

Both were expected gifts — desirable and deeply appreciated. Both Immanuel and the mighty messenger were part of the expectations of the people. But the gospel of Matthew tells us that “the birth of Jesus the Messiah” took place in a way that no one saw coming (v. 18).

He was an *unexpected gift*.

“When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit” (v. 18). Pregnant by the Holy Spirit — that’s *unexpected!*

On this side of history, we know how it turned out. Yet I wonder if we have lost the wonder of God’s gift of unexpected presence. God’s promise was found true then. God’s promise to be with us and provide for us remains true today.

Take time this Advent and Christmas Season to wonder. Remove any doldrum or despair and make room for God’s surprise – just for you.

Peace and Joy+

Pastor Hill

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JOANNA

++++
Greetings to you, disciples of Christ!

Faith formation. Many things come to mind when I write these two words. When I think of faith formation, I think of taking a class or hearing about a curriculum that outlines every detail a person of faith needs to know. It’s just the

two-word phrase really, because take those two words back apart and I think of a potter at the wheel, of a piece of clay unformed and in the process of becoming. I think of all the classes, Sunday Schools, retreats, confirmation camps, bible studies, and surprise conversations that have each had an impact on my own faith journey. I think of the transformative work of God in us.

This month, Pastor Hill and I have been having inspiring conversations about ideas for ministry in 2022. Like two ping pong players at the table, we've been bouncing catch phrases that summarize and capture the whole of ministry at Mount Horeb Lutheran Church. Who are we and what are we about? Who are we called to be? Who forms our faith? These things are important. At the beginning of the church season, we look also to the beginning of the calendar year. In 2022, we want to remind each other of the formative things that happen because of who God is and how that is made known among us.

By our faithful God, we are transformed in our baptism. We are new and renewed every day as God's people. We are formed, reformed, and transformed by God our creator. And that's not all! We stand together in faith and are gifts to one another. In relationships and on our common ground of faith, we are all both the clay and the potter; always formed and forming in God's good world. The idea of faith formation (the way we sometimes use it) then needs to be reminded that we are not on an objective mission, like one with a checklist and accomplished tasks. We are works in progress; we are always becoming within the gift of faith that God gives us.

So, say the words faith formation to yourself or to a friend or family member. Think about what comes to mind for you. Think about how we form in, around, about, because of faith at Mount Horeb Lutheran Church. Think about what you do and what more you can do to witness to your own experiences and share them. Faith forms faith, and we are never done in God's abundant life-giving faith.

Peace, Comfort, and the Joy of Christ is yours,

Pastor Joanna

CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION continues for 6th through 8th grade students. It is led by Pastors Joanna and Hill in room #203 each Sunday from 9:45-10:45am. The three-year curriculum focus includes Small Catechism, The Old Testament, and The New Testament and is a part of Mt Horeb's faith formation for all children from nursery age through High School. This year's focus is on the Old Testament. During December, students will join the Pastors' Class in the Fellowship Hall.



CHRISTMAS ANGELS FOR WE CARE Mt. Horeb committed to 20 Angels and 20 or more Gift Cards for We Care Christmas 2021.

We have just a few Angels left for adoption in the Narthex with their sizes and a few wishes to use as a guide for your families as they purchase gifts. After you choose your angel, please put your name and phone number on the sponsor sheet next to the number of your angel. (This is purely for purposes of keeping track.)

Please return the gifts **unwrapped** in a plastic bag with the Angel tag securely attached with the label side visible to Mt. Horeb Fellowship Hall. The family number and child letter are used to identify which family should receive these gifts.

If you would like to further bless these families, please consider including a small blanket, gloves, hats or Christmas stocking to your gift bags.

If you wish to purchase gift cards instead of adopting an Angel, please purchase \$25 Walmart or \$25 Target Gift Cards and ask for the store to print a separate gift receipt for each card and include it with the cards. Please return the gift cards to the Church office or in the Offering Plate. There are envelopes provided on the Angel Tree if you'd like to use them for the gift cards.

Please have all gifts and gift cards to Mt. Horeb by **Friday, December 3, 2PM.**

We appreciate your willingness to help bring joy to these children by your generous spirit and we pray that our Lord is glorified through our efforts to celebrate His birth.

Questions? Paula Mills 317-412-0281, Arnie Wodtke 803-479-8741 or Cindy Rego 803-920-1232.



PROGRAM is in need of canned pasta. Please leave your donations at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. Mt. Horeb has committed to provide 184 cans per week! If you have questions, contact Barry McCall. Thank you!



OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are Monday 9am-Noon and Tuesday-Friday 8:30am-4pm.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION If you are looking for a church home, you are welcome at Mt. Horeb! We invite you to contact a pastor to learn about Mt. Horeb's history, our Vision for Mission, and God's call to ministry rooted in Baptism. Mt. Horeb members are also encouraged to extend an invitation to anyone seeking a church home (neighbor, co-worker, friend, acquaintance).



CHOIR REHEARSAL is back! Join us each Sunday from 9:30-10:00am in the choir room. All are welcome!

ATTENTION ALL MINISTRY TEAMS Your annual reports are due into the church office by December 15th for the 2022 Directory.



ANNUAL REPORT

DON'T FORGET ABOUT WE CARE, our community outreach agency! Collection boxes can be found both upstairs and downstairs. Here is a list of constant needs:



- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| +Peanut butter/jelly | +Spam |
| +Chili, soup | +Canned chicken |
| +Dried beans | +Grits, rice |
| +Pasta, spaghetti sauce | +Mac & Cheese |
| +Turnip/collard greens | +Pork & Beans |
| +Laundry detergent | +Personal hygiene items |
| +Canned tuna/salmon | (toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc.) |



ALTAR FLOWERS UPDATE

American Floral, the vendor we use for Altar Flowers, no longer bills our members individually and are now billing Mt. Horeb directly. If you would like the church office to order Altar flowers for you, let us know. You can drop your payment (\$52) off at the office or in the offering plate and designate it to the Altar Flower Fund.

COVID-19 UPDATE

In response to recent decline in Covid numbers, the pastors will begin removing masks to speak during worship. We continue to watch the covid-19 case numbers and percent positive data. Mt. Horeb's Council continues to endorse CDC guidelines (feeling well, suggested spacing, vaccinations, and mask wearing) for indoor activities. We all seek to provide a safe environment as we think of each other. Thanks!



DECEMBER PASTORS' CLASS will be held during the Sunday school hour in December, the pastors will lead a special class in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 9:45am using Adam Hamilton's course, *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem*. They will utilize video, Bible, and conversation. The Confirmation students will be combining their class with this one for the month of December. All members and guests are invited.

YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

YOUR RESPONSE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT to Mt. Horeb continues to be a blessing! Offerings may also be sent in by mail, placed in the drop box near the portico, or provided online through PayPal and Tithe.ly (look for the red 'Donate Online' button). We are thankful for everyone's prayerful support, and your offerings are greatly appreciated.



WE JUST GO NUTS FOR WE CARE! Sunday, December 12th, right after the second service we are having a "Pecan Picking Party" for We Care. We have been blessed with numerous Pecan trees on our property. It is a perfect opportunity to provide these favored holiday nuts to We Care to share with their families. So, mark your calendars and plan to join us. Of course, we plan to have some treats and drinks to reward our efforts.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING Merry Christmas! Join the Fellowship team as we spread Christmas Joy by visiting and singing songs of the season! Meet in the Fellowship Hall for a brief singing practice **Sunday, December 19 at 3:30**. We'll divide into singing groups and get a driving/walking route. Gift bags will be ready to pick up for delivery to those we visit.



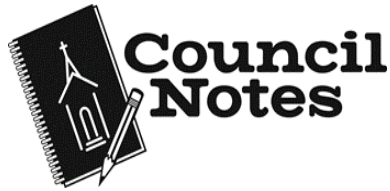
- ⇒ The Sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Center. Please indicate if you are willing to be a driver.
- ⇒ After caroling, all singers are invited to return to the Fellowship Hall for Hot Chocolate and Christmas Cookies!

This is a great opportunity for fellowship and the perfect time to celebrate together the birth of Jesus! The more the merrier!



Christmas Eve
SERVICE

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES will be held at 11am as quiet communion and lunch following the service, at 5pm as a family Christmas service, and at 7pm as a traditional Christmas service which will be livestream.



Highlights of Congregational Council Meeting for November 2021

The council met on Sunday, November 14 2021 via Zoom. The council took action on or discussed the following items:

The council approved a motion to approve the spending not to exceed \$2500 for the purchase and installation of a dockable personal computer for the church administrator which will be financed through memorial funds and residual funds from the fire settlement.

The Worship Team is planning for Advent and Christmas Services. There will be three Christmas Eve Services: 11 am with lunch afterwards, 5 pm and 7 pm. The 7 pm service will be live streamed on You Tube.

The Serve Team reported that the Angel Tree project is currently underway. A harvest of the Community Garden is planned for early December. The Pecan Harvest has been moved to December 12. A contribution of \$750 has been made to the HUB Thanksgiving fund.

The Fellowship Team was thankful for the congregation's support of the Trunk or Treat event. Nineteen families from the congregation participated in decorating their trunks and distributing candy. There were many families from the community who participated. The team felt like it was a successful event. The team is now planning for Christmas Caroling on December 19. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex for those interested in participating.

The Finance Team reported that for the month of October, revenues totaled \$45,611 and expenses totaled \$42,237 for net income of \$3,374. Year-to-date revenues through October were \$433,667 and expenses were \$438,138 for a year-to-date net loss of \$4,471.

The Ministry Review Team provided a final report to the council to be used as the strategic objectives for the upcoming year.

PRAYING FOR:

- +Annette Stuck
- +Jane Ramsey
- +Don Ramsey
- +Vie Wilmot
- +Henri Bishop
- +Miller Lindler
- +Ron Stockman
- +Jim Johnston
- +Aubrey Metts
- +Patsy Comalander
- +Mary Kern
- +Ginny Hatfield
- +Carolyn Bishop
- +Brady Amick
- +Nancy Crogen
- +Charlie Shealy
- +Gayle Wicker
- +Billy Rauch
- +Margaret Greene
- +Bonnie Counts
- +Brian Comalander
- +Jim Pope
- +Tess Wessinger
- +Fred Stuart
- +Pauline Wodtke
- +Inga Rodgers
- +Family of Fae Swittenberg on her death
- +Jimmy Lindler on the death of his sister, Janelle



PRAYING FOR FRIENDS OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

- + Sonny Blocker, brother-in-law of Robbie Koon DeFreese
- + Cindy Heming, Gavin Wells' godmother
- + Melissa Smith, sister of Dean Smith
- + Ronnie Chapman, nephew of Rosemary Frick
- + Sadie Gillian, friend of Jennifer Wells
- + Marie Fulmer, niece of Loretta Griffin & family
- + Amelia Kinard, sister of Billy Griffin

- + Sarah Grace Jerkins, great-niece of Anne Wessinger
- + Linda Floyd, friend of John & Cathy Rodgers
- + Sue Carver, friend of Joanne Wessinger Hill
- + Tyler Grubbs, friend of Lillie Free
- + David Owens, friend of Edward Neeley, Fred Garren and Tommy Hill
- + Lorraine Revels, daughter of friend of JoAnne Hill
- + Marie Syrett, sister-in-law of Mary Kern
- + Al Zaback, cousin of Jerry & Vicky Shealy
- + Sally Thompson, sister-in-law of Susan Addy
- + Diane Nichol, friend of Susan Addy
- + Keith & Bonnie Maddox, Cindy Rego's parents
- + Evren Ray, great-niece of Susan Addy
- + Chris & Eddie Shealy, sons of Gene & Ann B. Shealy
- + Sherri Adams, Paul Rego's sister
- + Tommy Ward, friend of Jim Pope
- + William Eckley, cousin of Vicky Shealy
- + Payton Dominick, great-nephew of Glenda Lindler
- + Tyler Richardson, son-in-law of Pastor Dick & Jeannie Webber
- + Heidi Smith, Lew's wife
- + Todd Buehler, Debbie Hjelseth's brother
- + Landon Derrick, Wes Hill's classmate & friend
- + Jimmy and Liane Talbert, uncle and aunt of Mattie Smith
- + Richard Gregerson, son of Vie Wilmot
- + All those serving in the military



BIRTHDAYS

1 John Rodgers, III
Ann B. Shealy

3 Catherine Nelson
Avis Lindler
Bill Moser

5 Lindsey Campbell

7 Kathleen Parks

8 Dot Blaney
Kelly Gowans

9 Keith Summer

10 Holly Knight
Kim Shealy
David Williams

11 Austin Bundrick

12 Bill Dukes
Brian Hollis
Katie Morgan

13 Debbie Humm

14 Robbie Frick

17 Paul Rego

18 Jimmy Lindler

19 Bill Stockdell

20 John Rister
Marley Shaver
Amy Splittgerber
Bart Teal
Wes Hill

22 Holly Comalander
Russell Long

23 Mary Grace Leininger

24 Nancy Crogen
Tammy R. Shealy

25 Andrew Hill

27 David Crede
Harvey Fulmer

29 Jennifer Rister

31 Triston Alford
Lillie Free

ANNIVERSARIES

8 Jimmy & Melinda Morris—20

12 Dennis & Dianna Frick—34

15 Geo. Jr. & Teresa Wessinger—58

17 Heyward & Dot Kleckley—73

18 Ken & Susan Crabtree—50

20 Bill & Phyllis Barton—41

31 Tim & Laurie Schmidt—20

If you do not see your birthday or anniversary (or if our info is incorrect), please contact the church office so we can add you to our birthday and anniversary lists or correct our information.

DECEMBER 2021 CALENDAR

Pastor Joanna's Day Off—Thursday

Wed, Dec 1 11:00 Dorcas Circle
(meeting @ Catch22)
8:00 LCY Donuts &
Devotions

Sun, Dec 5 8:30 In-person &
(Blue) Livestream w/
Holy Communion
9:45 LEARN
11:00 In-person w/ Holy
Communion
4:00 LCY

Pastor Hill's Day Off—Saturday

Sun, Dec 12 8:30 In-person &
(Blue) Livestream w/
Holy Communion
9:45 LEARN
11:00 In-person w/ Holy
Communion
5:00 Worship Team
7:00 Council Meeting

Wed, Dec 15 8:00 LCY Donuts &
Devotions

Thur, Dec 16 6:30 Agape Circle

Sun, Dec 19 8:30 In-person &
(Blue) Livestream w/
Holy Communion
9:45 LEARN
11:00 In-person w/ Holy
Communion
3:30 Christmas Caroling

Tue, Dec. 21 6:00 Luthereaders

Wed, Dec 22 8:00 LCY Donuts &
Devotions

Fri, Dec. 24 11:00 Quiet Communion
(White) (w/ lunch to follow)
5:00 Family Christmas
Service
7:00 Traditional
Christmas Service
Livestream w/ Holy
Communion

Sat, Dec. 25 *CHRISTMAS DAY!*

Sun, Dec 26 8:30 In-person &
(White) Livestream w/
Holy Communion
9:45 LEARN
11:00 In-person w/ Holy
Communion

Wed, Dec 29 8:00 LCY Donuts &
Devotions

*HAPPY NEW YEAR!
2022*

MHLC

101 E. Boundary St.
Chapin, SC 29036

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

CHAPIN SC

PERMIT NO. 9

UPCOMING LCY EVENTS

December's Youth Calendar at a glance:

The MHLC Youth group is meeting on Sunday, December 19 to join the Christmas Caroling. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 3:30 and be sent out in groups to spread the Christmas Cheer. Wear warm clothes, some of our routes will be walking ones. We are also collecting blankets, gloves, and winter hats for WeCare. Bring a donation and then a gift (no more than 10 dollars) for us to exchange while we drink hot chocolate after we are done caroling. Happy Advent!



Contact Us

Mt. Horeb Lutheran

101 East Boundary St.
Chapin, SC 29036

(803) 345-2000

mthoreb.net

Ralph G. Hill, Pastor
pastorhill@mthoreb.net

Joanna C. Gragg,
Associate Pastor
pastorjoanna@mthoreb.net

Camille Joseph, Admin
frontdesk@mthoreb.net

Jenny Leininger, Treasurer
jenny@mthoreb.net