

FIRST MORAVIAN CHURCH
225 N. 10TH STREET
EASTON, PA 18042-3370
The Rev. Sue Koenig, Pastor
Laurie Toyberg, Secretary

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Phone: 610-258-6317

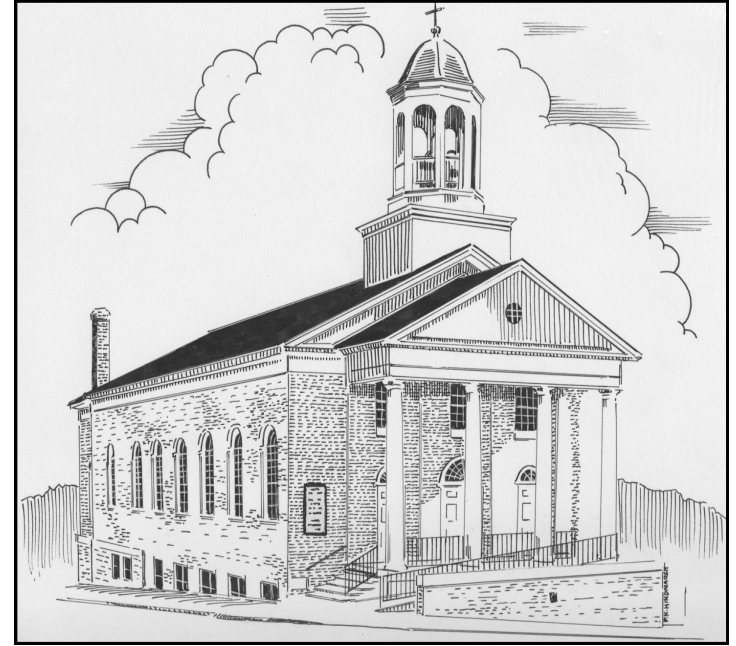


Worship Sundays 10:45 AM
Summer through Labor Day 10 AM
Fall/Winter/Spring 10:45 AM

***Christmas Eve Lovefeast & Candlelight
Service 7 pm***

THE FM STEREO NEWSLETTER

December 2024



**In Essentials, Unity
In Nonessentials, Liberty
In All Things, Love**

Congregational Watchword for 2024

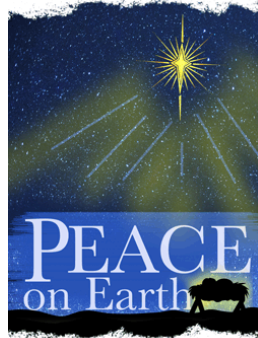
God called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9c

Dear Friends in Christ,
 Nearly a year ago, we choose our congregation's watchword text, 1 Peter 2:9c: "God called you out of darkness into God's marvelous light." Throughout Advent, we wait for the coming of The Light of the World, even Jesus Christ. Yet, the darkness is often where growth and transformation occurs before new life begins.

On the first Sunday in Advent, children and youth in our Sunday School program will hear from "Growing in God's Love," the story of God's miraculous gift of a son to aging parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah. In the darkness of their long wait, and in the silence of pessimism, God renews their hope, releases them to sing a new song, and brings them both the child they longed for, and new life for themselves. Zechariah will name the child John, and will proclaim God's purpose for John's life:

*76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
 77 to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.
 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
 79 to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:76-79)



While we wait for the Dayspring from on high, and for the light to break upon us, we open ourselves to miraculous possibilities for transformation and renewal of hope as we prepare the way for the Lord's coming. The ways of our preparations are to confess our sins and receive God's mercy, forgiveness, and saving grace; with the refining fire of God's prophetic word, to be freed from impurities that dull our compassion and empathy, and our experience of God's covenantal love; and awaken to the peace that surpasses all understanding. This is God's way of peace, a peace that endures as we follow the Prince of Peace, take off our shoes and travel the mountainous barriers of life to bring good news and proclaim peace, to say, "God's reigns." (Isaiah 52:7) May the Light of the World bring you renewed hope and peace this Advent. Pr. Sue 2



MORNING STAR SOLOISTS

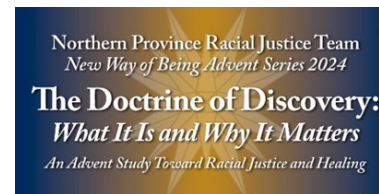
Please let Pastor Sue know by **December 8** if your child or children would like to sing "Morning Star" for the Christmas Eve service. Every child is invited to take part in this tradition!

DECORATING FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Everyone is invited to assist with decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas on Saturday, **November 30** from 10 am to noon. Thank you in advance for your help and for the fellowship of this time together.

CHURCH COUNCIL 2025

Our annual Church Council will be held on **Sunday, January 19, 2025**, with an inclement weather date of January 26. We will worship together, share a covered dish lunch, and then convene for Church Council. Staff and committee reports are requested by January 7. Annual Reports will be available on January 12. The Unified Board asks every member who is able to attend worship and the meeting to hear about the ministries of the congregation in the preceding year, and to assist with planning for the future. If you are asked to serve on the Unified Board, please give this request your prayerful consideration. Information on the responsibilities of Unified Board members is available from the church office.



The Doctrine of Discovery: What It Is and Why It Matters

December 4, 11, and 18
 7:30-8:30 pm ET

The Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team is pleased to present its *New Way of Being Advent Series* for 2024.

This year's theme is, "The Doctrine of Discovery: What It Is and Why It Matters." There will be three one-hour sessions on December 4, 11, and 18 at 7:30 pm ET. All sessions will be on Zoom. We will welcome a guest presenter each week. The session on December 4 will include a short film on the Doctrine of Discovery from the Episcopal Church's Sacred Ground curriculum. Also included in the sessions will be prayer, scripture readings, and time for reflection. The series is open to all. Participants are encouraged to read the 2023 MCNP Synod legislation entitled, "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius and Initial Steps Towards Reconciliation and Healing of the Church's Relationships with Indigenous Peoples." The Zoom access for all three sessions is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83789192982?pwd=Jw3uYBKL8lot4OUK6XVZlqdB4IpsMO.1> Meeting ID 837 8919 2982, Passcode 718545

An accompanying four-week Bible Study and Advent devotional are available. For complete **speaker bios, the 2023 MCNP Synod Legislation, Bible Study and Devotional**, visit: <https://www.moravian.org/northern/2024/11/13/newwayofbeing2024/>



**SIGHT AND SOUND'S "MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS"
COMING TO FIRST MORAVIAN**

The Sight and Sound Theatre's "Miracle of Christmas" is coming to First Moravian! On Saturday, **December 7**, we will stream this amazing presentation of the beloved story of the birth of Jesus, with its gifted cast, massive sets, and live animals, and you, your family, and guests, will be able to see it all right in our sanctuary! The "Miracle of Christmas" event will begin at 3 pm. Dinner will follow in the Fellowship Hall. This event is made possible through a generous donation. Come and prepare your hearts for Christ's coming and reach out with an invitation to your family, friends, and colleagues. Please RSVP to the Church Office with your name and number in your party by December 4, 2024.

Watch the trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouuMjIuzvs8&t=7s>

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER 10:45 am

Advent begins a new year in the church, and this is Year C in the revised common lectionary, when most gospel readings will be from Luke. This Advent, we will listen to the voices of the prophets—Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah, and Micah—as they bring God's good news to God's people.

Dec. 1, First Sun. of Advent/Sunday School/Holy Communion

"To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." (Psalm 25:1). We lift up our souls and open our hearts to hear the word from the prophet Jeremiah: on this First Sunday of Advent. The worship will include the Liturgy for Advent with the Hosanna, and a service of Holy Communion.

Dec. 8, Second Sunday of Advent/Holy Baptism/Voice Choir

"Prepare the way of the Lord. All flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Luke 3:4,6) It is with great joy that we celebrate the sacrament of Holy Baptism for Luke Michael Davis, infant son of Zakk Davis and Talia Austin. The choir will sing, "Come, Messiah, Come."

Dec. 15, Third Sunday of Advent

"I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you." (Matt.11:10) Zephaniah prophesies joy as God's judgment has prepared the way for repentance. (Zeph. 3:14-20)

Dec. 21, Longest Night Service 4 pm

(See the article in this newsletter.)

Dec. 22, Fourth Sunday of Advent/Carols & Lullabies

"You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly." (Luke 1:52) Jim Dronenburg will play the harp for our worship today offering carols and lullabies for our meditation as we draw nearer to the birth of Christ. Come with expectation and longing for the long-expected Jesus.

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve Lovefeast & Candlelight Service 7 pm

December 29, First Sunday after Christmas

Worship today will be in the form of a seasonal service of *Lessons and Carols and Reflections*. We continue our celebration of Christmas, "The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven." (Ps. 148:13)

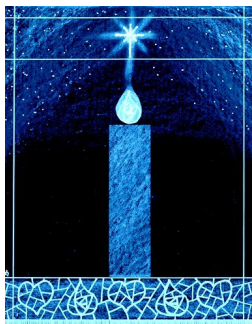
January 5, Second Sunday after Christmas/Christmas Liturgy

HANDBELL AND VOICE CHOIRS

The handbells and voice choirs are preparing music for Advent and Christmas. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm (voice) and 7:30 pm (handbells.) All are welcome! Thank you!

"A SERVICE OF REFLECTION ON THE LONGEST NIGHT"

A Blue Christmas Service will be offered on Saturday, December 21 from 4 to 5 pm. This time of reflection and prayer for "The Longest Night" is open to all. This year we are pleased to welcome Jim Dronenburg who will play the harp for the service. We especially pray that those who are grieving or for whom this time of year is accompanied by sadness will find comfort and hope in the readings and music of this evening. Please gather in the sanctuary. The service will also be available via Zoom. Use the Sunday Morning Worship Zoom access information: Meeting ID: 997 5374 8227, Passcode: 544713.



Let there be peace



CHURCH & SOCIETY 2024 CHRISTMAS PROJECT

The Church & Society Committee Project will benefit the clients of Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley. Turning Point is a non-profit community-based agency that provides shelter and other valuable services for victims of domestic violence in Northampton and Lehigh Counties. Turning Point requests gift cards, especially from: Walmart, Target, Giant, and Weis.

To participate in the 2024 Christmas Project select a tag from the tree in the narthex beginning December 1, and see Frank Chisesi to purchase a Moravian Money gift card. Make your gift purchases by **Sunday, December 15**. Thank you for supporting this year's Christmas Project! Your love and compassion will make the holidays much brighter for residents of Turning Point. *Members of the Church & Society*

GRATITUDE FOR THE FALL & HOLIDAY CRAFT BAZAAR

First Moravian Church extends its gratitude to all who made this year's Fall & Holiday Craft Bazaar a huge success. We thank Frank Chisesi and Dawn Hughes for suggesting changes to improve the Bazaar and organizing this event, Mike LoQuasto, Sr. and Sue Wexler for advertising, everyone who made beautiful crafts, delicious baked goods and food; and all who helped or shopped at the Bazaar. We are grateful and give thanks that we raised \$2,000 from the Bazaar this year, up from about \$1,400 last year!

4

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SHOP

The Children's Christmas Shop will be "open" on **Saturday, December 14, from noon to 2 pm**. All children and their families are invited. Children will have an opportunity to shop for the perfect gift for each of their family members, and to wrap them to await Christmas Day. Items will be priced at \$2.00 or under, with proceeds benefitting Family Connections of Easton. Donations of gifts for the children to purchase for grandparents, parents, siblings, and other family members are needed. A container for your gifts is available in the entrance area of the church.



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

First Sunday Sunday School will meet on Sunday, **December 1 at 10:45 am**. In preparation for the seasons of Advent and Christmas, children will learn a fuller story of *The Birth of Jesus*. This month's lesson is "A Prophet is Born," Luke 1:5-21, 57-80. Mary, the mother of Jesus visits her cousin, Elizabeth, who through her own miraculous experience will have a son who will be a prophet for God. Children will meet Elizabeth, her husband Zechariah, and the one who will "go before the Lord to prepare the way."



Children will spend a brief time with their families and the congregation at the start of the service, and then go to the Fellowship Hall for Sunday School. Registration forms and other materials are available at the church or by calling the church office at 610-258-6317. Children ages three through 13 are invited. Older children may serve as helpers.

If you would like to assist with this ministry, to teach or serve as a helper, please let Pastor Sue know of your interest. Thank you!

ROBOTICS

Children and youth and their families are invited to the Robotics Ministry sessions with Mike Koenig offered the first Sunday of each month following worship and Sunday School. The next session will be **Sunday, December 1 at 12:15 pm**. Meet in the rooms behind the sanctuary. A light lunch will be provided.

Be sure to see the photos from last month's class on the back of the calendar...and a photo of the children ringing the bell!

9

WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY

We extend our prayers and deepest sympathy to the family and friends of our beloved brother in Christ, Paul Peifer, who entered the nearer presence of the Savior in early November.



We extend our prayers and deepest sympathy to the family and friends of our beloved sister in Christ, Evelyn “Evie” Gullick. Evie entered the more immediate presence of the Savior on November 10, 2024. A Celebration of Life service was held at First Moravian Church of Easton on Monday, November 18, 2024.

I Will Light the Candles This Christmas

From “The Mood of Christmas...”

—by Howard Thurman

I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

LOOKING AHEAD...

Here are highlights of what is ahead for **January 2025**:

01/01 New Year’s Day
01/06 Epiphany of the Lord
01/12 First Sunday after Epiphany/
Holy Communion
01/18 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (01/18-25)
01/19 Second Sunday after the Epiphany
Covered Dish Luncheon and Church Council
01/20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
01/26 Third Sunday after the Epiphany/Ecumenical Sunday
(Inclement weather date for Church Council)
Open House at the Parsonage following worship

FIRST MORAVIAN UNIFIED BOARD

Members of the Unified Board met on November 24 at 12:30 pm. Pastor Sue opened the meeting with prayer. The agenda, October 20, 2024 meeting minutes and Pastor’s October report were approved with one clarifying correction. Highlights from the November meeting include:



- ◇ Unanimous approval with joy for a request from Zakk Davis and Talia Austin for the baptism of Luke Michael Davis on December 8; and the use of the Fellowship Hall for a reception for the congregation following the worship service that day.
 - ◇ Approval of the date of January 19, 2025 for our annual Church Council meeting, with January 26 as a back-up date if needed.
 - ◇ Frank Chisesi advised the Board of our current financial status: to date, we have a deficit of \$9,783, and a cash balance of \$11,626 with approximately \$3,000 of those funds restricted; medical and LTD payments for remaining months in the amount of \$1,950 will be paid before year-end. With receipt of notification of changes to our insurance policy, we will explore options for a lower deductible and rate.
 - ◇ Frank reported that the application he submitted to the Larger Life Foundation for \$10,000 for church painting was approved! The estimate for the remaining painting is \$19,000. With the grant funds, and about \$2,000 in the Paint and Building Funds, and the generous offer of Frank Chisesi and Carl Lerch to paint the lower portions of the church, we will be able to complete the project next year. The Board expressed appreciation to Frank for all his hard work on behalf of First Moravian.
 - ◇ The Board supported planning the Bell Dedication in the spring.
 - ◇ A year-end congregational letter was approved.
 - ◇ Responses from the Town Hall meeting on November 10 were reviewed and discussed with appreciation to those who provided feedback. The expressed hopes, concerns, and suggestions offered by the congregation will assist the Board’s planning for 2025; initial plans for reaching out to past members were made.
 - ◇ The Bazaar was a great success, raising \$2,005! We will increase the 2025 income budget for fundraisers to \$10,000.
 - ◇ We reviewed the Advent and Christmas worship and event plans and are excited to have 30 people registered thus far for the *Miracle of Christmas* on December 7.
 - ◇ The meeting concluded with The Lord’s Prayer.
- The next Unified Board meeting will be December 15 at 12:30 pm.

PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

ADVENT RETREAT



Quiet your heart and mind and retreat from your daily routine and activities of the season for a time of quiet reflection and pondering of the mysteries of God's Holy Incarnation and birth. Come to the Advent Retreat on Monday, December 16, from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. A light lunch will be served. Please email or call Pastor Sue by Saturday, December 14 if you plan to attend. All are welcome.

UNITY PRAYER WATCH

Pray for the Needs of Our Worldwide Unity

The Worldwide Moravian Church Unity prays continuously for the needs of the church and the world. Our day for the Unity Prayer Watch is **December 8**, a day we share with Newfoundland, Palmer, and Westside Moravian Churches. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex with our assigned times. There will also be a list of prayer requests to guide your time of prayer. Pray, too, on **World AIDS Day**, December 1.



"SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER"

Everyone is invited to gather for prayer at 4 pm on Wednesday afternoons. Those who would like may bring a short devotion, poem, or story to share. The *Sweet Hour of Prayer* is held virtually using Zoom and may be accessed by everyone via a regular phone. To join via phone, call Zoom at 301 715 8592, enter the Meeting ID 934 9796 5599 followed by #. Enter # when asked for your participant ID; enter the passcode 892624, #. Please note that we will not meet on December 25, 2024 or January 1, 2025.



PRAYER AND VISITATION MINISTRIES

Please contact Pastor Sue if you would like a visit at home, care facility, or hospital; if you would like to receive Holy Communion at home; or if you are in need of prayer. Members of our Prayer Chain are always ready to pray for you or to join you in prayer for others. We would also like to assist you with getting on ZOOM for worship or by providing frozen meals. Call the Church Office at 610-258-6317. Meals are for everyone.

6

PRAYER CONCERNS

Members of First Moravian Church

Those in care facilities

Gloria Bolmer	Leah & Andrew Brown	
Anne Hajdu	Anita Johnson	James Shook
Dorothy Price	Tom Wolfe	Cal Wexler

Those at home

Janet Balogun	Donald Bodden	Mary Buccos
Bill & Laurie Bullock	Vickie Erb	Bob and Stella Harling
Julie Loquasto	Diane Kohler	Frank Cigus
Shirley Buck	Barb Leshner	Bettemae Weiss
Jose & Pam Morrow-Henriquez		Donna Pritchard

Congratulations to Talia Austin & Zakk Davis (big brothers Robby and Liam) on the birth of their son, Luke Michael on November 3

Those expecting: Jada Bullock & Roger Boyd

Those grieving: Families and friends of Evie Gulick and Paul Peifer; Susanne Kessler and Carl Lerch and Family upon the death of daughter Lisa Deibert's husband, and grandson Jake Clause's father, Will Deibert

Friends of our First Moravian Church Family

Gilbert Hendershot	Leo Pitts	Baby Dominic and Family
Tyler & Alicia Cox	Bob Morgenstern	Deena Kohler
Dave & Deb	Elyse	Phil Schell
Ellie and family	Jeannette Leshner	John Morgenstern
Pastor Jean Huber	Jeff & Brenda Fogel	Ryan & Dave
Sharon Long	Helen Lerch	Noah Shook
Anne, Brian, Thomas & Nancy MacIntosh		Dorey Smith

Families and Friends of Rebecca Martin, Russell Timberman, Ronold Karasek
The Mountainview Moravian Church Congregation



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/02 Marcella Sos
12/04 David Haffner
Judy Hummel
12/08 Donna Pritchard
12/09 Sue Ficzeko
12/10 Lisa Konders
12/16 Laurie Bullock
Patricia Nodoline
12/18 Walter Cigus
Pam Morrow-Henriquez
12/21 Giada LoQuasto
Emma Sampson

EARLY JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

01/03 Noah Triolo
01/04 Jenna Mamana
01/07 Michael LoQuasto, Jr.

*With your presence,
Lord our Head and Savior,
bless them now we humbly
pray...*



7