

December 2022

THE GROWING EDGE

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104



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A PRAYER FOR DECEMBER

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Heavenly Father,

In this season of advent we reflect on all things your son Jesus came to this earth to do. In his physical time here and beyond, we thank Jesus for showing love, giving us hope, teaching peace and filling our hearts with joy. Born in a manger, our savior in flesh proved just who you said he would be. We give thanks with open hearts and love unimaginable. We ask for warmth in these cold months; both for our bodies and hearts.

In your sons holy name, Amen



PASTOR LEXI ALIGARBES

The season of Advent is upon us and we at First Church continue to be alert and attentive to what God is doing here on Hummel Street. In the first week of Advent, I found myself sending email after email reminders to everyone about the many different things happening in the life of our congregation. In one week, we had “Trivia Night” with bcmPEACE, the start of our Advent Bible Study, Church Council, the guest preacher Rev. LaDonna Sanders Nkosi, and the bcmPEACE Bowl-a-thon, on top of our normal weekly programs and gatherings. To say that we’re active would only begin to scratch the surface of what God is doing here. So, in the midst of it all, I am grateful for the waiting season that is Advent.

When Pastor Josiah and myself were setting up the Advent Wreath, he was joking with me that I’m very liturgical. Part of that has to do with some of my upbringing in a Lutheran Church, but I also think that it’s because I enjoy the ritual. I enjoy the routine of taking time to pause and light a candle in the Sundays leading up to Christmas because I know that I need this reminder. In conversations with some of my clergy friends, one of them made the remark that they relish in this season of Advent because it is a time we are so open about our neediness for the Lord. As I think about all that is happening here at First Church, it is so clear that none of it would be possible without the Lord. Even at a time when we see the Spirit at work, I want to be quick to assert that we remain in desperate need of God.

The ministry that God is shaping here at Harrisburg First is built upon a foundation that only by God, through God, and with God, we will have an opportunity to be the church God is calling us to be. Each new dimension of ministry we embark on and as we continue on in our journey towards anti-racism and LGBTQ+ inclusion, or economic justice with our new Deacon Emergency Fund, is born out of our desperate need to be in a deeper relationship with God and with one another. However, acknowledging our neediness is the place in which I find hope, peace, love, and joy.

As another year ends, I hope that God will continue to make a way for our Church Family to be together and to do the ministry we are called to do. I have a sense of peace knowing that we continue to embark on hard and difficult things because we have been in prayerful discernment with one another. I am transformed by the love of God that fills our church every day of the week. And I remain joyful, that even in the challenges we face, Emmanuel, God is with us.

GOD MAKES A WAY WHERE THERE WAS NO WAY

Advent is a season of hope and expectation. It's a season of promises made and promises kept. This is a season where God Makes A Way Where There Was No Way. We eagerly anticipate the celebration of our Lord's Birth. We equally anticipate our Lord's return. And these feelings of hope and expectation are near to my heart and mind as I think about all God is doing here at First Church. I'm excited for the day when we can dedicate our new windows in the front of our sanctuary. I'm waiting with expectation to join many of you in supporting the Sankofa Theater group's production of "The Black Nativity". It excites me to see how our Deacon Emergency Fund is being re-branded and re-tooled to meet the needs of our siblings as challenges arise. I eagerly await joining all of you on Christmas Eve and then the next day as Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year. This list goes on and on...

The Birth of Jesus just serves to prove that our God will make a way where there is no way. I'm not sure who needs to read this, but whatever you are going through, even if it seems as though all is lost, God will make a way! If you're feeling alone, and no one seems to care, God will make a way. If you're up against it financially and you don't know how the bills are gonna get paid, God will make a way. God has done it before and God will do it again.

Church, God has made a way for us again and again. When our wonderful Lead Pastor, Belita Mitchell, ended her tenure with us in 2020 many of us wondered where we would be. God made a way. God brought Pastor Lexi to us, and God made a way for Pastor Belita to remain and even take on the role of Deacon. When God called Janet Myers to Pastor in Virginia taking our wonderful brother Dave with her, many wondered what would happen. God made a way, in bringing to us Natasha Beaumont to lead our praise team occasionally and Christian Johnson to fill in on the keys.

Over the course of our more than 125 years of continuous ministry here on Hummel Street, we have remained faithful as God has called us to do some new and sometimes even crazy things. But God has and God will continue to make a way where there doesn't seem to be a way! Let us live into this certainty this Advent season as we await the path that God marks out for us as a family.



PASTOR JOSIAH LUDWICK

Our Community Ministries

bcmPEACE

GET CONNECTED!

- Donate your unwanted clothes to Community Aid using our partner number #10018
- Come take a tour of the space and community
- Become a Board Member
- Become a Mentor
- So many more opportunities!

CLOSINGS AND VACATION

Offices will be closed on the following dates:

- Dec. 26 – Jan. 1 for Christmas/Holiday Observance

ADD IT TO THE CALENDAR

- December 4th – Bowl-a-thon
- December 7th – Santa Shop

WE ARE MOVING TO A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER!

This will be a seasonal newsletter with the first distributed in December for the winter edition.

What's Happening?

Agape Satyagraha

participants have been continuing to gain knowledge on Conflict Resolution and Nonviolence strategies! We were excited to welcome 2 new participants and 1 new Fast Track participant this past month!



New Board Members!

We are excited to welcome Matt Kirkley, Diana Karlinsey, and Sandy Jackson to our Board! We are sad to be saying goodbye to Steve Seitz and Colin Scott, our Chair and Vice Chair respectively. So many changes in the life of the ministry!

Pathway to Prosperity

Just in the past few months, we have assisted with over \$1700 in emergency assistance and held over 6 meetings focused on self sustainability and growth. We are blessed to be able to assist with the needs in the community!



Searching for a Ministries Director

We are looking for someone interested in a part time position focusing on managing and visioning for our programs! Please see our website for more information on how to apply and share with friends! Applications are being accepted until Dec. 9





bcmPEACE

BOWL-A-THON

DECEMBER 4 | ABC EAST | 2-4PM

TEAM PRIZES INCLUDING:

- Most Money Raised
- Best Team Name
- Best Dressed Team
- Best Team Mascot
- Most Team Spirit

PEACE RAFFLE!

look forward to purchasing tickets for some fun raffle prizes!



scan the QR code to donate now!

all information, donations, registration, etc. is available on www.bcmpeace.org/bowlathon

Make sure you are keeping up with all things bcmPEACE by checking out our website www.bcmpeace.org! Also if you are not already receiving our publications, we would love for you to sign up for our mailing list. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to share the things that make for peace!



"Serving Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace."



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HELLO CHLOE!!



Hi everyone! My name is Chloe Soliday, and I am serving at Harrisburg First CoB with bcmPEACE as a Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) worker. I grew up in Saxton, PA and recently graduated from Berea College in Berea, KY with a BA in Peace and Social Justice Studies. This is my second time serving with BVS, having previously worked at Creation Justice Ministries in Washington, D.C. after graduating from high school in 2017. I arrived in Harrisburg just over a month ago, and have enjoyed getting to know folks in the Harrisburg First community while taking in a new city. During the week, you can find me at Agape– Satyagraha on Wednesday evenings, Wellness Hub on Friday mornings, and occasionally on Sunday mornings at worship– please don't hesitate to come say hello!

Faith and Justice Corner



Black Panther: Wakanda Forever



The latest entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe has arrived with the much anticipated sequel in the Black Panther franchise. As in the first film, there is much related to post-colonization, racial and social justice as it relates to Black and Brown people throughout the film. The newest addition to the Marvel canon is a Latinx Mayan Dynasty that fled to the sea when colonizers and their diseases ravaged their peoples and their lands. In addition to these themes you will find a great deal relating to grief and loss as the film deals with the real-life death of former star Chadwick Bozeman and the on screen passing of Wakanda's leader, T'Challa. Themes of family, trust and East African/ Haitian/ Latinx cultures pervade and peace ultimately triumphs as the cycle of violence is ceased between the two dynasties. Much more would go into spoiler territory, but suffice it to say that this movie is a fun intercultural experience, and one that I'm eager to have again!

Report by Pastor Josiah

The Youth Corner



CHRISTIAN ED TEAM LEADER NEEDED!

Are you someone who is passionate about teaching and education? Do you enjoy staying organized and planning events? Are you looking for an opportunity to get involved here at First Church? Well the Christian Ed Team is looking for a new team leader for 2023! If you are interested in serving in this way contact Donna Benson or Pastor Lexi for more info.

DID YOU KNOW?

The true meaning of Christmas is about the birth of God's Son - Jesus. It is about how he came to give us love, hope, and joy.

While we anticipate Santa's arrival this year and all the gifts he may bring, let us also think of Jesus who gave us life's greatest gift.

You can find the full story in your bible!

Luke 2:4-19.



A JOYFUL NOISE

The youth here at Harrisburg First have been working on a special Christmas piece to perform on December 18th!



YOUTH GROUP IS EVERY SUNDAY!

Congregational News and Announcements

Praise Reports

For this Advent Season as we
look forward to celebrating our
Savior's birth and wait
expectantly for His return

For another year of faithful
ministry here in South Allison Hill
and for the Faith Family with
whom God continues to bless us

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please considering filling a role to help us
worship the lord each Sunday. The signup sheet
can be found on our welcome table.

4 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

11 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

18 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

25 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

Are YOU talkin' back?

Sunday Bible Study has returned in the
form of a "talk back" immediately
following service. This will include going
deeper into scripture and discussing the
sermon. There will be a primary class
available for that age range as well as
the Young Disciples continuing past its
normal time to accommodate childcare.

Advent Bible Study

Advent has begun! This Bible study is open to
all. Feel free to come with a Bible, Journal,
something to write with, and an openness to
the Spirit. If you have any questions about this
week's Bible Study, do not hesitate to contact
the pastoral staff.

Prayer Requests

For Mary Stillions who continues to be
hospitalized. Pray for healing, that he doctors will
figure out what's going on and for David, her
primary caregiver.

For Andy Fuge as he recovers at home from his
brain event. Pray for continued recovery and for
Chuck and Helen who are offering care and
support until he can return safely to his own home

For those missing loved ones this holiday
season. For some, this season is blue and we
pray that God would help all people realize they
are not alone, that God has given us the Holy
Spirit and one another to dwell together during
life's difficult times.

MORNING MEDITATIONS

Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every
Wednesday at 9 am via Zoom! We will be
highlighting different forms of spiritual practices,
prayer, and meditation. If you are in need of spiritual
grounding, please consider entering this space!

Announcements

Christmas Poinsettias are now in full bloom! To place an order, please find an order form in your bulletins or on the welcome table. The last day to place an order will be Sunday, December 11th.

The church office will be

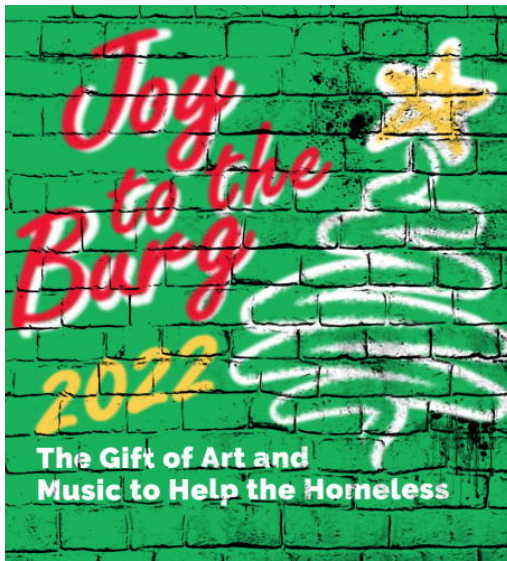


December 26th- January 1st

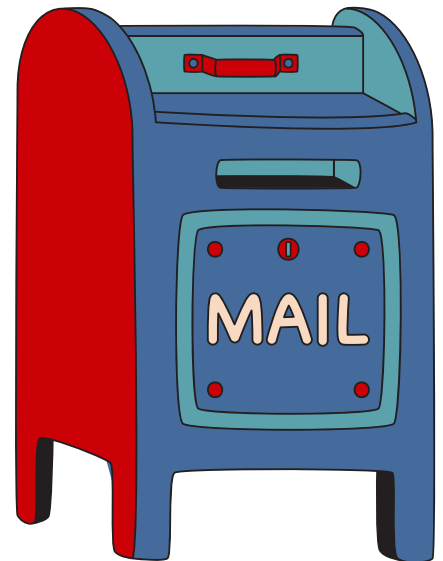
ROOM RENTALS!!



Do you or someone you know have an event coming up or are in need of a large, affordable venue? Look no further! First Church offers space to host gatherings large and small! Contact me at 717-234-0415 in the church office for more information!



As a friendly reminder, please remember to place all order forms and other mail or documents in the Office Manager's mailbox rather than on his desk! This helps to keep things organized and prevent things from getting lost!



Joy to the Burg Live! At the Englewood is two events over a full day of music, spotlighting performers from the Joy to the Burg 2022 album at this special holiday event. These events will feature songs from Joy to the Burg albums over the years as well as other holiday favorites and even non-holiday favorites from these local artist's repertoire. The showcase is being held at The Englewood, a beautiful new performance venue in Hershey, Pennsylvania. 100% of album sales and ticket sales from this event go to support two winter shelters and outreach to those on the street through the work of Christian Churches United. Great events for a great cause! Tickets are on sale now!



More Announcements

On Earth Peace

Sing Me Home is offering a benefit concert for On Earth Peace at the Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, IN on December 3, 2022. Sing Me Home is a collaboration between the band, Friends with the Weather and the Manchester Church of the Brethren, with a mission to create "an intergenerational celebration emerging at the crossroads of music, social justice, and spirituality. Serving to restore and inspire the heart, mind, and soul.



BLACK NATIVITY By Langston Hughes

A Gospel Christmas Musical Experience
Music arranged by Aaron Robinson
December 9, 10, 11
Fri. & Sat. at 7:30 p.m.
Sun. at 3:00 p.m.



On Sunday December 11, 2022, a group from Harrisburg First will attend a performance of the Langston Hughes play, "The Black Nativity". You may have heard of Sankofa as bcmPEACE awarded its founder, Ms. Sharia Benn, with one of our Peacemaker Awards at our banquet this year. The play tells the story of Jesus' Birth through a Black American lens with Gospel, Soul and Jazz

Music throughout. It is to be held at the old West Shore Theater in New Cumberland, the significance of which should not be lost on anyone. New Cumberland was once a "sundown town" and, all these years later, its theater marquee will be adorned with the words "The Black Nativity" for several weeks. If you were unable to get your tickets with our group, but would like to attend, they may be purchased at:

<https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?actions=4&p=1>

Church Women United Gathering

On Saturday, December 3rd at 10:00 am, Church Women United will meet at Colonial Park United Church of Christ for a light breakfast of coffee, tea, and goodies. We will have a short worship time and we will sing Christmas carols in their church parlor. Then at 11:00 am we will go to their Fellowship Hall to visit their Creche Festival. Donations can be made to Christian Churches United. Questions – ask Doris Ziegler.



Birthdays & Anniversaries!

December 4th	Ruth Lotz
December 10th	Dianne Negley
December 11th	Butch Eisenhower
December 14th	Christopher Brenneman
December 15th	Rachel Ludwick
	Sunada Roberts
December 19th	David Stillions
December 21st	Sara Brenneman
December 23rd	Ellie Hunn
December 25th	Rachel Knight
December 26th	Janet Barchue



Anniversaries

Gerald & Rita Rhoades
December 12th

Jon & Sara Brenneman
December 29th



Deacons of the month

Rick Mehaffie
Mark Pickens

Do YOU want to submit something for the Growing Edge? Please send the material in to the office by December 19th.

DECEMBER ANE DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

Pray for this Church

This Church is Praying for Us

4 Dec 22	Lititz (Lititz, PA)	Coventry (Pottstown, PA)
11 Dec 22	Wilmington (Wilmington, PA)	Spring Creek (Hershey, PA)
18 Dec 22	Lampeter (Lancaster, PA)	Amwell (Stockton, NJ)
25 Dec 22	Puerta Del Cielo (Reading, PA)	Ebenezer Project (Lampeter, PA)

DECEMBER 2022

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

4

All Church Council Meeting
bcmPEACE Bowl-a-thon

5

11

12

bcmPeace Board Meeting @ 6:00 pm

13

Special Services Meeting @ 2:00 pm

14

Adult Bible Study @ 7:00 pm via Zoom

15

16

17

18

19

BRT Meeting @ 4:00pm

20

21

Adult Bible Study @ 7:00 pm via Zoom

22

23

24

Christmas Eve Service

25

Christmas Day

26

27

28

29

30

31

Wellness Hub CLOSED

New Year's Eve

Indoor and Zoom Worship at 10am

Staff Meeting @ 12:30pm

Midweek Meditations @ 9am
Computer Class @ 10:30am & 2:30pm
Agape Satyagraha @ 5pm

Pastors Day off

Wellness Hub @ 10am

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The monthly newsletter of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

Josiah Ludwick, HFCoB
Co-Pastor

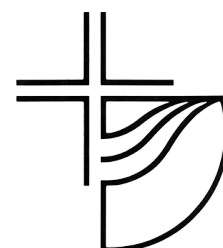
Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB
Co-Pastor

Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE
Executive Director

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Office Manager

Our Staff

We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace and justice of Christ.



The Growing Edge is a publication of Harrisburg First Church of The Brethren for our members, friends, and neighbors.