



HOPE NOTES

December 2020

Hope Lutheran Church of Forest Hills

*Serving the Community
with Love*

*Hope is a congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America*

Sunday Worship on zoom
10:30 am & 3:00 pm

Taize Prayer Service 7:00 pm
(zoom)
first Friday of every month
(except June, July & August)

P.L.U.M. Pastoral Team

Rev. John Gropp - 412-680-7867
Rev. Brenda Henry - 412-390-8005
Rev. Dr. Paul Koch - 773-848-1470
Pastor Susan Devine - 412-496-4889
Vicar Mandy Gilberti - 814-241-8150

*Hope Lutheran Church
353 Ridge Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
412-242-4476*

*Hopeforesthills@aol.com
plumofpa.com*

Office Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. - 9 a.m.-noon
Susan Lescinsky, Secretary

Church Council:

Jane Cushion, President
Barb Kochuba, Vice President
Lynda Joyce, Secretary
Dave Hauser, Treasurer
Kathie Nelson, Member
Janet Moberg, Member
Pam Hall, Member
Kristina Fennell, Member
Bev Koch, Member

JESUS COMES TO CALL US OUT

“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (Luke 4.7)

This verse from Luke’s Gospel brings to mind very special and cherished images: a specially crafted shelter containing Mary, Joseph, sheep, shepherds, and perhaps a star and angel. Of course at the center of the scene is a newborn baby. Perhaps this verse also brings to mind beloved Christmas carols, like Silent Night and Hark the Herald Angels Sing. And it might remind us of a gaily decorated church with a sparkling Christmas tree and candles all through the sanctuary. The verse might also bring to mind family and friends, near and far, who have come to celebrate the holy day. It is a familiar, comfortable and comforting scene.

Given our current circumstances, these images and memories will at best be virtually portrayed or not seen at all. While this reality might discourage or dampen our enthusiasm for Christmas, we would do well to plunge ourselves into the meaning and significance of the birth of Jesus - the center of all these images and merrymaking.

We might remind ourselves that Jesus was born into a hostile world to an oppressed people. Within two years of his birth, King Herod sent his army/police to slay all male children two years or younger! Jesus’ birth did not immediately improve the lot of the shepherds, members of the poor, underclass. And his birth did not improve international relations between the Magi and King Herod. Soon after Jesus’ birth, the Holy Family took on the plight of the dislocated when they escaped to Egypt in order to avoid the murderous police sent from Jerusalem.

Finally, let us not forget that Mary and Joseph were not wealthy or privileged. At first they didn’t receive a warm welcome in Bethlehem. In fact, there is no mention that the assistance of a midwife or even neighboring women were available to Mary as she labored in childbirth.

But what was that message that the angels sang in the sky to the shepherds and shepherdesses: ***“Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you goods 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 . . . Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors.” Regardless of our circumstances, we are invited to give God the glory and to celebrate the arrival of our Savior and Lord into our world and into our hearts and homes.

This wonderful announcement is made to those of us who are struggling to keep our children safe from the virus while feeding, clothing, sheltering and providing for their education. The announcement is ringing in the ears of the seniors who live at home, in senior facilities or are lying in the hospital. It is a joyous announcement to first responders and all the service people who spend what seem like endless hours helping and assisting our families and neighbors.

If ever there were a time to sing with loud voices **“Hark! The Herald Angels sing. Glory to the newborn king; peace on earth, and mercy mild.”** This is an announcement that is also sent out to the impoverished of the world, living in the slums of Argentina, in the refugee camps of the Middle East, and in the pockets of poverty in the USA. This is an announcement that is sent to those suffering from various addictions (rich and poor) and those who are lost searching for meaning in their life.

This year’s celebration of Christmas may not look like the Christmases of the past and may not live up to our expectations and memories; however, the message is still

true and genuine: God’s Love came down from heaven on Christmas and continues to come down for all of God’s people, regardless of their current circumstances.

“Come, let us adore Him, come, let us adore Him, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!”

+Pastor Paul for the PLUM Pastoral Staff

To better care for our communities in a time of increasing COVID-19 numbers, the strong recommendation of Bishop Kusserow and in consultation with the PLUM Board, it is the decision of the pastoral team to suspend all in-person worship and meetings (through the end of the year). We will continue to discern when it is appropriate to resume in-person gatherings in consultation with the Synod office.

~ Two Weekly Sunday Services on Zoom ~

10:30 am and 3:00 pm
~ with communion ~

Please join friends from PLUM for
Advent Family Bible Study
on Zoom

This study starts December 1

Tuesdays at 1 pm and Thursday at 7 pm

We will explore the meaning behind the four candles
of the Advent Wreath...HOPE FAITH JOY LOVE

YOU are always welcome!



Christmas Eve Services

~ on zoom ~

Thursday, December 24

7:00 pm Family Service

11:30 pm Candlelight Service

*Please know that the PLUM Pastoral Team is available to you.
Do not hesitate to contact them to share concerns and
celebrations. May the Love of God be your comfort and peace.*

Dec 1

1:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 3

7:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 4

7:00pm Taize Prayer

Nov 6 Advent II

10:30am Zoom Worship

3:00pm Zoom Worship

Dec 8

1:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 10

7:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 13 Advent III

10:30am Zoom Worship

3:00pm Zoom Worship

Dec 14

7:00pm Council

Dec 15

1:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 17

7:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 20 Advent IV

10:30am Zoom Worship

3:00pm Zoom Worship

Dec 22

1:00pm Advent Bible Study

Dec 24 Christmas Eve

7:00pm Family Service

11:30pm Candlelight Service

Dec 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

Dec 27 Lessons & Carols

10:30am Zoom Worship

3:00pm Zoom Worship



Taize Prayer

Friday, Dec 4 at

7:00 pm

~zoom~



Northside Common Ministries

For the Northside Common Ministries to provide gifts from Santa Claus for around 300 families during the pandemic, they are asking for \$15 or \$20 gift cards (which are easier to distribute) to Dollar General or Target. If you would like to participate you can mail the gift cards to Attn: Santa Claus , Northside Common Ministries, 1601 Brighton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212...or you can drop them off at the church and we will mail them. If you don't want to buy gift card(s) and want to make a monetary donation, we will purchase the gift cards for you.

Continued Support Needed

We are especially grateful for those who have been able to continue sending or dropping off their donations. Your support of Hope's ongoing ministry is greatly appreciated and encouraged.

Thank you again!

G & J Dollars

G & J Dollars continue to be collected for Rise Against Hunger. Add your contribution to the marked jar in the Narthex.



DECEMBER Pocket Change Pantry Network of Eastern Suburbs

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PLUM's Pastoral Team is ready and waiting for a call from anyone in need of care or who would appreciate receiving Communion. Just give any one of them a call and they will be there for you.

2021 Sponsors

Sign-up sheets are now posted in the Narthex for:

*Altar flowers
Sanctuary Candle of Hope
Hope Notes*

Collating Team

*Pam Hall, Doris Hoffman
Ruth Bellas, Susan Liebmann,
JoAn Kress*

December Birthdays

3rd JoAn Kress
4th Pr. Susan Schwartz
7th Tony Units
12th Diane Rose
14th Doris Hoffman
17th Brenda Henry

November Anniversaries

31st Allen & Diane Rose

Prayer List

Joyce Hunter, stroke
Garnet Despot, health problems
Linda Christiansen, kidney
replacement
Morgan Green, 15yr old,
leukemia
Cindy Doriguzzi
Chastity, seizures
Rhonda Hill, brain tumor
McKillip family, son Landon
diagnosed with autism
Ed Perry, cancer
Alecia Francis, herniated disc
Gary Stowe, skin cancer
Robin Hannah, knee surgery
Michael Koch, stroke
Pr. Susan Schwartz, foot
surgery
Mary O'Hara, fractured hip
Kent Tarpley, spinal surgery
Mike Marciniziyn, cancer
Greg Smith, health issues
Matthew Stumme, leukemia
Mark Ridge
Lorraine Easudes, knee issues
Jill Ann Swick, breast cancer
Ray Smith, myasthenia gravis
Jim Ofslager, cancer
Jennie Cosentino,
complications following surgery
Joe Urban, heart surgery
Dick Dougherty, lung problems
Bob Leech, brain tumor &
myasthenia gravis

Alexi Jackson, cystic fibrosis
Marjorie Krick, breast cancer
Dawn's mother, Ann Baluh, physical problems
David Fennell, leukemia, lymphoma
Carol Harper, dementia
Susan Liebmann, health concerns
Ken Noll, pinched nerve
Diane Rose, cancer

Gaisor family, recent death of Mary Ann 10/20
Johnston family & friends, death of Shirley 8/20
Heasley family & friends, death of Gary 8/20

*We pray for members of our armed forces

*We pray for those facing difficult life situations

*We pray for our loved ones who are homebound, in care facilities, or
in need of on-going prayer, including: Isabel Dering, Mary Beth
Tomo-Gardner, Henrietta Partner, Peg Portera and Carol Harper

*We pray for our congregation and for our leadership: Barb, Pam, Bev,
David, Janet, Jerry, Lynda, Kristina, Jane

*We pray for Bishop Eaton, Bishop Kusserow and their staff

*The November issue of Hope Notes is sponsored by JoAn Kress
In memory of her brother, Art.*