

## An Advent Reflection

We began this Advent series with a promise; we end with a bold declaration and an ironic twist to our story. Luke 2 began with a decree from one who is seemingly the most powerful ruler in the world, the emperor Augustus. His decree for a census, sent from Rome, went throughout the empire to force taxation—hardly a moment of great joy for the oppressed peoples of the world. Unlike the human couriers of Rome, this holy announcement comes from heaven through a divine messenger. The angel announces the birth of a Savior, a title used for the Roman emperors but rarely in the Gospels for Jesus. The intent of the writer is clear: Despite outward appearances, Jesus is the ruler of the world, not Augustus.

The birth of this child offers an alternative to Roman authority. The announcement comes first to lowly shepherds outside the city, far from the arenas of power. This Savior has come to bring “good news to the poor . . . [and] proclaim release to the captives” (Luke 4:18). The message comes outside an empire of domination and extends to “all the people,” especially the downtrodden and ignored, liberated by this Lord. The protective canopy extends beyond the walls of the city into the wild areas of life and to the dispossessed.

What is the result? Great joy! The joy begins in the heavens with the outpouring of praise by the angelic host. After the shepherds visit the child, they return glorifying and praising God. By the end of chapter two, the good news reaches the temple precincts. Simon and then Anna, a widow of eighty-four, is the last in the chapter to praise God. Young and old, men and women, earthly and heavenly beings, rich and poor all rejoice at Jesus’ birth and praise God.

Handel’s masterful *Messiah* spans the life, passion, and resurrection of Christ. The “Hallelujah” chorus, sung at Christmastime, captures the theme of this chapter from Luke—unmitigated praise. Praise, in the end, brings recognition of the one true Lord. Handel’s chorus, lifted from scripture, celebrates this reign. May our praise this season lead us to the conviction of the one true Ruler of the universe—Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords—forever.

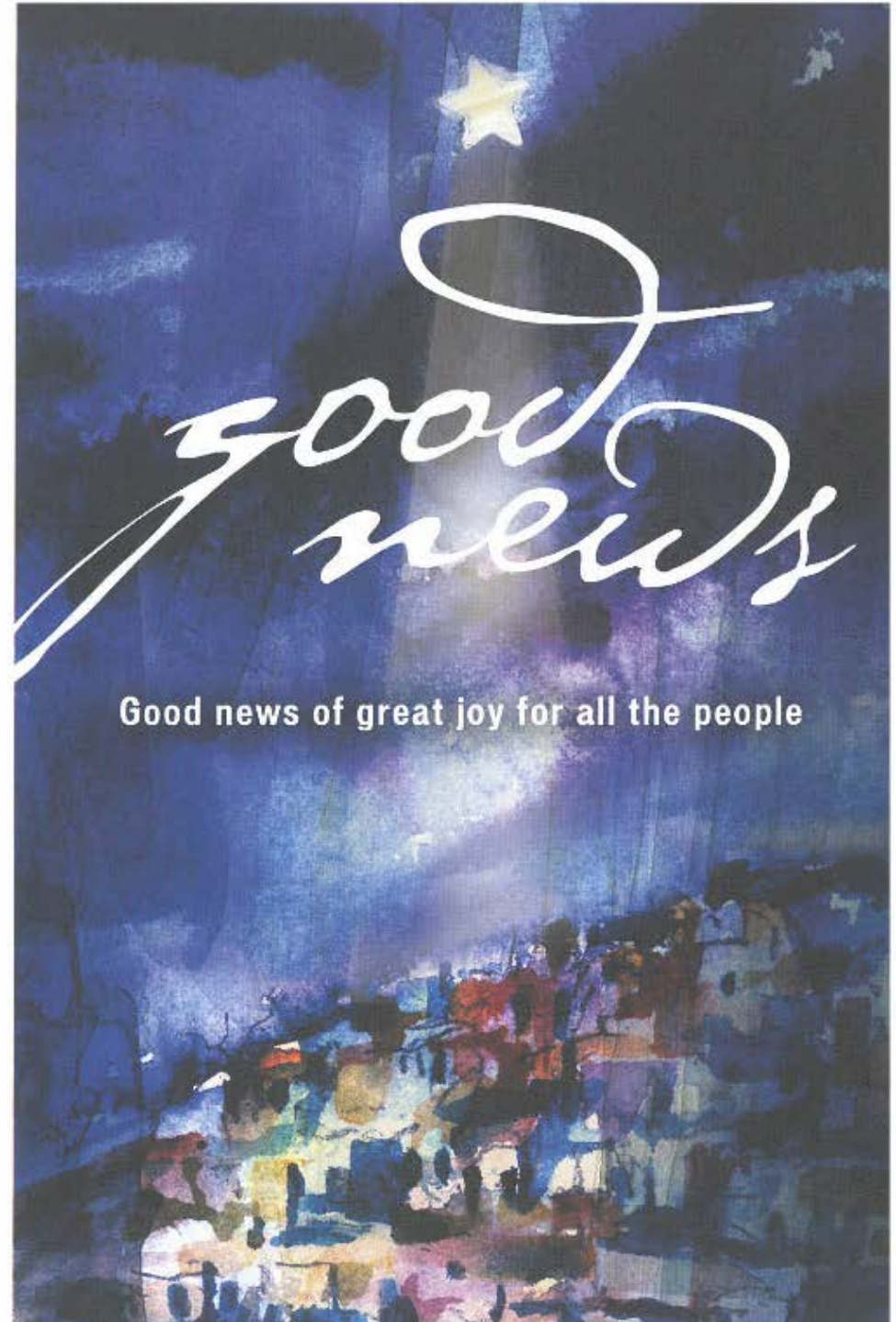
—Robert W. Neff  
University Baptist & Brethren Church  
State College, Pennsylvania

**Text for today:** “But the angel said to [the shepherds], ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you *good 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’” (Luke 2:10-11, NRSV).  
**Bible readings for today:** Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20).

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# THE BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

at Worship December 27, 2015 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

## GATHERING

**PRELUDE** (11:00) What Child is This? *arr. Joel Raney*  
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming *arr. Victor Labenske*

**CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER** Jeff Carr  
Please sign and pass the *Friendship Register* pad located at the inside aisle of the pew. Signing helps us learn the names of those worshipping near us. After all have signed, the pad can be passed back to the inside aisle.

## CHRISTMAS LITURGY

**Scripture Reading** Psalm 148  
**Story of Light** Figgs Family  
**Christmas Prayer** (*Unison*) ~Sing the Story, #125, adapted  
*God of Christmas, in the darkest days and nights of the year, our hearts turn toward your light. With the first faint glimmer of a single candle, our hope is ignited once more. In these Christmas days, we are led by your light in to a manger where the face of God shines bright and clear. Amen.*

**\*HYMN # 212** *O come, all ye faithful* ADESTE FIDELES

## PROCLAIMING

**CHILDREN'S TIME** (11:00) Jeff Carr  
Children of ALL ages are invited to the front of the sanctuary for a time of building upon and connecting to faith through stories and interactions.

**SCRIPTURE READING** Luke 2:41-52

**\*HYMN # 215** *What child is this* GREENSLEEVES

**SERMON** "Lost and Found" Jeff Carr

## RESPONDING

**REFLECTIONS** (8:30) Music for contemplation, followed by conversation.

**SINGING WITH BRENT, FAMILY AND FRIENDS** (8:30)

**DUET** (11:00) The First Noel *arr. Lloyd Larson*  
*Jolene Flory and Ted Flory*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### OFFERING

#### Invitation

#### Offertory

(8:30) We bring our tithes and offerings to the worship center.

(11:00) Ushers receive our tithes and offerings.

Meditation on "The Coventry Carol" *David Lasky*

**SCRIPTURE READING** Colossians 3:12-17

**\*HYMN # 201** *Hark! the herald angels sing* MENDELSSOHN

### \*BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE** (11:00) God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen *arr. Joel Raney*

## MEETINGS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE & NURTURE

**December 27, 2015 – January 2, 2016** (All events are p.m. unless noted)

This is a church events calendar and does not include all building events use.  
Please be sure to schedule ALL EVENTS through the church office.

**Mon.-Fri.** Church Offices Closed

**Mon.** 6:30 Jan Matteson Memorial Service Sanctuary

**Fri.** *Happy New Year!*  
Church Offices & Building Closed

**NEXT SUNDAY– January 3, 2016 – *Second Sunday of Christmas***

**Worship:** 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. – Sanctuary

Pastor Jeff Carr, preaching

Sermon: “Enlightened Transformation”

Scripture Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14 & John 1:1-18

**Sunday School** – 9:45 a.m. – Classrooms

## BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

*An inclusive family of faith seeking to follow Jesus  
and live the love of God.*

### ***Our Mission...***

*As an inclusive community of faith, we commit ourselves to embody the love of God and to share our diverse lives and gifts with each other and the world. Through faith formation, worship, mission, and fellowship we boldly proclaim the peace and love of Christ. Together we work for justice, extend grace, and partner with God to offer abundant life, healing, and hope to our community and the world.*

### ***Our Values...***

*Sharing life together and including all persons in our common life.  
Growing in faith, compassion, and understanding.  
Serving one another and our neighbor's good.  
Sharing the love of God and the God that is love.*

### **PASTORAL MINISTRY STAFF**

**Jeff Carr** – Senior Pastor

**Chris Zepp** – Associate Pastor

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACILITIES MINISTRY STAFF**

**Fortunato Correa** – Custodian

**Phil Flory** – Treasurer

**Shannon Puffenbarger** – Administrative Assistant

**Leon Rhodes** – Head Teller

**Glenna Wampler** – Business Manager

### **PROGRAM & MUSIC MINISTRY STAFF**

**Kathleen Arndt** – Child Care Center Administrator

**John Barr** – Organist

**Jim Benedict** – Bell Choir Director

**Jeanie Eye** – Christian Education Director

**Mary Beth Flory** – Pianist

**Marianne Houff** – Children's Choir Director

**Ellsworth Neff** – Sound, Light, Video Coordinator

**Curtis Nolley** – Sanctus Choir Director & Music Coordinator

**Clarke & Hope Staton** – Youth Ministry Coordinators

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

420 College View Drive, Bridgewater, VA 22812

[www.bwcob.org](http://www.bwcob.org) / (540) 828-3711

Normal office hours are Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-Noon, and 1-5 p.m.

## SUNDAY MORNING INFORMATION & TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

### **HOSPITALITY CENTER in the Greeting Hall**

Nametags; large-print Bibles, hymnals, & bulletins; listening receivers; and information are available here.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:45 a.m.**

**Representative** – Jeannie Turner

*All Are Welcome* brochures, available in the pews and literature rack, list specific Christian Education opportunities and locations.

**PARKING ASSISTANCE:** 10:30-10:55 a.m. every Sunday.

### **CHILDREN ARE WELCOME!**

Children are always welcome among us and in our corporate worship gatherings. Activity bags are available in the greeting hall for their use and enjoyment. Additionally, childcare for children ages birth to kindergarten is available as well as a “cry room” for those who wish to listen and see the worship service in a separate room from the sanctuary. Ushers are more than willing to help you locate these resources.

**Guitarist** (8:30) – Brent Holl

**Greeters** (11:00) – Beth & David Michael  
Michael Figgs & Michael Figgs, Jr.

**Head Usher** (11:00) – Devin Bowman

**Sound/Light Operator** (11:00) – Ellsworth Neff

**Decorators** – Lori Lineweaver & Dwyann Stovall

**Deacon Caregiver** – Jan Flora

**Van Driver** – Donnie Fulk

**Worship Leader** –The Figgs Family

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

The main church office is closed through January 3. Some staff will be in and checking messages. If you have pastoral needs please contact Pastor Jeff by leaving a message at the office or calling him at home.

**2016 OFFERING ENVELOPES** are available to be picked-up in the greeting hall this morning. Anyone who would like offering envelopes for 2016 but has not made a pledge for next year or has not had them in the past should notify our Business Manager, Glenna Wampler. Weekly and monthly envelopes are available. Also, if you're interested in having your contribution made to the church electronically, forms are available in the church office or you may speak with Glenna.

**YEAR-END GIVING STATEMENTS** will be available for pick-up January 17 and 24. To help save postage, we'd appreciate you delivering any family or neighbors' statements.

### **ATTENDANCE /STEWARDSHIP FOR LAST SUNDAY: 12/20/15**

<b>Worship Attendance:</b> 8:30 – 26	11:00 – 313	<b>Sunday School:</b> 147
Pledges & Envelope Giving		\$23,168.75
Loose Offering		924.10
<i>Messenger</i> Subscriptions		43.00
Altruistic Class		166.10
Altruistic Class Social		827.60
Christmas Offering		6,880.00
Tree Lights of Love		260.00
Clarence Quay Memorial Fund		125.00
Jan Matteson Memorial Fund		150.00
JOY Circle		18.70

~ Leon Rhodes, Head Teller