

# The Transformer

December 2011

717-866-4910

*Friedens (Peace) Lutheran Church, 301 W. Washington Ave., Myerstown, PA*

“Fear not!”

The angel spoke these words to Mary, to Joseph, and to a group of shepherds on a hillside near Bethlehem. “Do not be afraid; for behold I bring 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).

Fear has a way of tying up our stomachs into knots, creating absent-minded thinking, and paralyzing panic in our bones. Fear, and its cousin worry, can grip our hearts and send us into a downward spiral of despair.

Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink... Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26).

Since 2008 the world changed and has been caught in the grip of an economic down-spiral motivated by fear. Worry has become a way of life. Houses foreclosed. People unemployed. Factories and companies out of business. Food costs in some places have risen 25%. More and more people are living in fear. Will I lose my house? My job? Will we ever recover from this recession or will it become a second Great Depression? How will I feed my family?

On March 4, 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said these words to a nation in the midst of the Great Depression: “Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself...” That still holds true today. Fear can cause us to do some really dumb things. Fear chokes out faith. Fear drives our economic (and personal) depression. Fear causes panic. Fear is a great motivator of the worst kind.

I can only imagine how fear was a huge factor on that first Christmas. A census was being done in order to raise already high taxes. Murderous, paranoid Herod the Great is king. The world was a dark and gloomy place. Mary is ready to give birth to her first born and finds herself in a dark, damp, dirty cattle stall. Fear was high.

On the hillside are shepherds keeping a fearful watch over their flock of sheep. All of a sudden the sky lights up and an angel proclaims: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11).

(Continued on Page 2)



Gerard (Gerrit) van Honthorst (1590–1656), Adoration of the Shepherds (Die Anbetung der Hirten, Adorazione dei Pastori, 1622). 164 x 190 cm, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

<sup>1</sup>Inspiration for this article came from the webpage—<http://www.joyfulheart.com/fear-not.htm>

Fear not! Fear is turned to joy as the shepherds hear the news that a Savior is born in Bethlehem, in the city of David. And so they run into the town and go from stable to stable until they find the child in the manger, just as it had been told. Tucked peacefully in that manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, is the Savior himself – God’s gift to the world.

A Savior rescues people in danger, preserves those who are threatened by harm, and protects people from the troubles that surround them. That’s what a Savior does! That’s what Jesus does for us.

Do not be afraid because a Savior has come to us, Jesus Christ, the Lord will:

- Never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
- Supply all our needs according to his riches in glory (Philippians 4:19).
- Add to us all the things we need as we seek him and his Kingdom (Matthew 6:33).



Our world doesn’t know it but Christmas isn’t about gifts wrapped and lying under a tree promoted by a spirit of getting. Christmas is about *the gift* that was wrapped and lying under the star of Bethlehem promoted by a spirit of giving. Jesus is that perfect gift of love. And love casts out all fears (1 John 4:18).

The world seems to be gripped by fear right now. But fear’s hold has been broken and is turned into joy for those of us who believe the angel’s words. We live not by fear then but by love – a love that is ours in Christ Jesus.

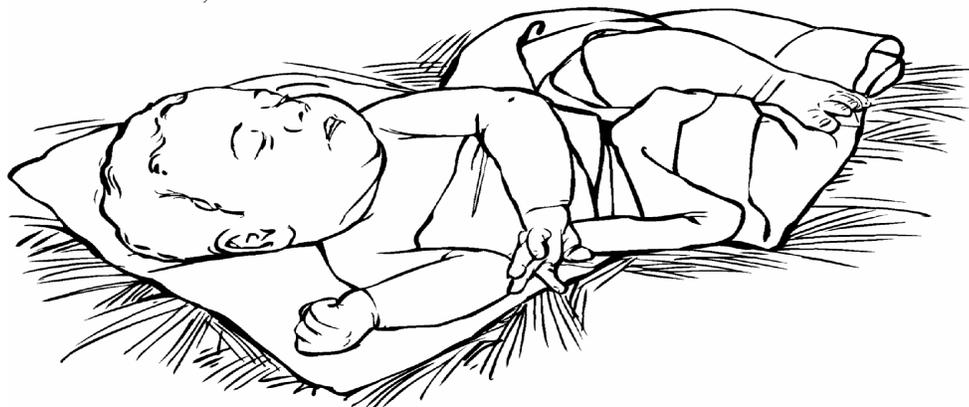
“Fear not... for a Savior is born to you... and his name is Jesus!”

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Miller

“A little child will lead them.”

Isaiah 11:6, NIV



# DECEMBER 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1  7 PM-Heavenly Metal Handbell Choir	2	3
4 9 AM—Contemporary Worship 10:30 AM-Traditional Worship	5	6	7 6:45 PM-Praise & Worship Band 7:30 PM-Adult Choir	8 7 PM-Anniversary Committee  7 PM-Heavenly Metal Handbell Choir	9	10
11 9 AM—Contemporary Worship 10:30 AM-Traditional Worship	12 Women of ELCA—Dinner Meeting	13 6:30 PM—Finance Committee	14 9 AM—Women Sew  6:45 PM-Praise & Worship Band 7:30 PM-Adult Choir	15 Deadline for newsletter articles  7 PM-Heavenly Metal Handbell Choir	16	17
18 9 AM—Contemporary Worship 10:30 AM-Traditional Worship	19	20	21 6:45 PM-Praise & Worship Band 7:30 PM-Adult Choir	22  7 PM-Heavenly Metal Handbell Choir	23	24 4 PM-Contemporary Worship—Holy Communion 7:30 PM-Traditional Worship—Holy Communion
25 10:00 AM- Worship	26	27	28 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM-Praise & Worship Band 7:30 PM-Adult Choir	29 7 PM-Anniversary Committee  7 PM-Heavenly Metal Handbell Choir	30	31



**DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP**

With Thanksgiving, being only a few days away it seems only natural to be reflecting on what and who we are thankful for. There are many places in the bible that refer to giving thanks, I was curious as to how many times so..... I looked it up and found that the phrase "give thanks" was mentioned 34 times in the bible. One of my favorite scriptures that immediately comes to mind regarding thanks is:

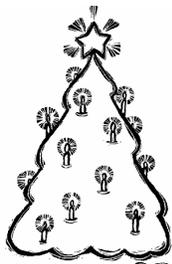
*"In everything give thanks; for this is Gods will for you in Christ Jesus"* (1 Thess. 5:18)

As I wrote out this verse the word "everything" popped off the page, "everything" that's challenging because there are situations we all face when we do not feel particularly grateful. There are troubles we face that can negatively affect every aspect of our lives, when we are faced with this... it is easy to lose our joy and take our focus off of Christ Jesus. As Christians we *all* face hardships & temptations in our lives from time to time, however we can trust that the Lord allows difficulty for a reason.....He may be growing us?? strengthening us?? changing us ?? Even when we don't understand it He always has things under control. I am so.... thankful that I can be confident in His wisdom for my life and know with certainty that He will accomplish His purposes in my life. The word encourages us to voice our gratitude to the Lord no matter what we are facing, when we do this.... we are focused on God instead of our problems. We all have so much to be thankful for our families, our friends, our health, our church, even just being alive are all reasons to celebrate and feel grateful to God! So I ask you....how many reasons can you find to give thanks??? I hope they're too numerous to count!

Blessings,  
Valerie

**Offering Envelopes**

**CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES** for 2011 are prepared and are on tables in the fellowship hall. Kindly pick them up. In case your name has been missed, please contact the church office.



*Christmas Eve*  
WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Services: at 4 P.M. is a Contemporary Service with a Traditional Service at 7:30 P.M.

**CHRISTMAS DAY,** December 25, there will be one Service at **10 A.M.**

*glory to God in the Highest*

## FAITH AND FAMILY

Luke 2

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Last year I wrote about taking time during the season of Advent to truly wait and prepare for the Lord. Since then I have found a wonderful resource for a Jesse tree devotional and ornaments. It can simply be downloaded from this link: <http://aholyexperience.com/1000/AJesusAdventCelebration.pdf> I encourage you to take a few moments and consider using it as part of your family Advent celebration.

So this year I am pondering the question “What would Jesus want for his birthday?” After all, birthdays are about celebrating and gift giving. What child or adult doesn’t enjoy opening a gift thoughtfully given on his/her birthday? Christmas is the celebration of Jesus’ birth--it is his birthday! Why then, so often do we give gifts to each other but not to Christ on his birthday? So what things might be on his list? What can we get Jesus for his birthday? Actually, we already have what Jesus really wants and that is US! Jesus wants to spend time with us. He wants us to spend time with him daily developing a deeper, more meaningful relationship with him. He wants us to help our children come to know him. The best gift we can give Jesus is to take the time to read his words and incorporate them into everything we say and do as we live our lives. We can model this for our children so that they too may be followers of Christ.

There is a thought provoking organization called Advent Conspiracy <http://www.adventconspiracy.org/> I invite you to take a look, as their mission is to “make Christmas a world-changing event again.”

They suggest 4 ways to make the Christmas season more meaningful and truly Christ centered. I would hazard a guess that perhaps these 4 things would be on Jesus’ gift list as well.

Worship fully—Open our hearts with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus

Spend less—Buy just ONE less gift this year and use the money to provide for the needs of others

Give more—Presence not presents

Love all—Give help to those who need it the most

Talk with your children and ask for their own gift ideas for Jesus. I’m sure they will have wonderful and meaningful suggestions. Consider incorporating one of those ideas and give a gift in the name of Jesus. Perhaps you will start a new family Christmas tradition.

Blessings,

Amber



Thank you for your prayers, calls and cards during the illness and death of Charles. Thank you Pastor Miller for your comfort and support, Jim Biever for the beautiful service music and Janet Moyer for your patience with the bulletin preparation.

In Christian Love,  
The Kieffer Family



*We want to extend a sincere thank you to the Congregation for the prayers, support and outreach in the form of meals, visits, cards and many gifts for our boys. We are overwhelmed by the love you provided our family during this scary event and challenging recovery period. It is a reminder that especially during the most difficult situations joining together in faith reveals God's presence that provides love, hope and healing. A special thanks to Pastor Miller for his quick response and calming reassurance at the hospital.*

Love,  
Dusty, Andrea, Austin, Connor and Ava



Much appreciation to the following individuals who came to wash pews and woodwork in the church sanctuary Saturday morning, Nov. 12:

Karen Lindermuth, Joanne Maurer, Joel Zinn, Dean Moyer, John Smith, Chad Beiler, Frank Armstrong, and Roy Schaeffer. Your "many hands" made light work!

Jan DuBois



**SHUT-INS BIRTHDAYS**

December 22  
Mr. Herbert Marks  
StoneRidge Towne Center  
S. Railroad St., Myerstown, PA 17067

December 24  
Mr. Millard Hamilton  
StoneRidge Health Care Center, Rm. 141  
450 E. Lincoln Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067

**OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS**

**October 2011**

				% of Budget	
Current Budget	Goal	\$29,428.00	Goal to Date	\$294,280.00	82%
\$353,139.00	Rec'd	\$30,280.00	Rec'd to Date	243,737.00	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	35.00	Rec'd to Date	673.00	
Hunger	Rec'd	370.00	Rec'd to Date	3,488.00	



## A Six-week Worship Series Advent and Christmas 2011

Advent brings a message of what was, what is, and what is to come. The Advent wreath reminds us of the growing light that is coming into the world – Jesus. As we worship, Jesus meets us in this place and shines with the light of hope into the darkness of our lives.



### **November 27** *Power in our Weakness*      **Mark 13:24-37**

The psalmist cries out, “Stir up your might, and come and save us.” The Gospel lesson declares that a day will come when Jesus comes to us in great power and glory. We often feel powerless and weak when faced with the profound suffering all around us. These texts remind us that Jesus has come and will come again to end all suffering and set everything to right, and until that day we are called to be about the work of the Kingdom every day.

### **December 4** *Miracle in our Messiness*      **Mark 1:1-8**

Advent is a season of preparation and expectation. John the Baptist appears on the scene and calls everyone to clean house, repent, get ready, reorder everything, and eliminate anything that would stand in the way of the coming Messiah. We need to listen to these voices that declare the miracle of God coming among us in human flesh. Much of the messiness of our culture stands in stark contrast to the plans and purposes of God. We are called to Kingdom living, which expects the miracles of God to occur every day.

### **December 11** *Light in our Darkness*      **John 1:6-8, 19-28**

In the middle of the shortest and darkest days of the year, the metaphor of light has extraordinary power. Jesus is declared to be the “light of the world,” and John’s Gospel calls us to not only witness Jesus as the light, but to testify to its good news for everyone. In this season of expectation, we can trust the promise of God to shine light into every darkened corner of our world through the One who is the light in our darkness.

### **December 18** *Promise in our Impossibilities*      **Luke 1:26-38**

Luke’s Gospel declares “nothing is impossible with God.” The angel Gabriel announces the good news to Mary that she will be the mother of the Son of God, and that her cousin Elizabeth will bear a child in her old age. In one brief announcement, Mary is faced with what might seem impossible, but she believes the promise and says, “let it be with me according to your word.” In our lives, we are often faced with impossible circumstances. We are called to believe in the promises of God and step into each day with faith and hope.

### **December 24** *With Us and For Us (Christmas Eve)*      **Luke 2:1-14**

Isaiah announces the gift of a child who enters our world bringing light and peace to all. And that’s just what happens in the tiny town of Bethlehem. The mysterious One becomes visible, small, and even vulnerable. God comes, not for those who think they have it all together, but for those of us who don’t, for those of us who often feel small and even vulnerable, broken and in bondage to sin. Though we know we don’t deserve it, the birth of Jesus announces the great good news that God is with us and for us.

### **December 25** *God in our Flesh (Christmas Day)*      **John 1:1-5**

This text declare the truth that God has come to us in human flesh in the One named Jesus Christ. This Jesus was present and active at the beginning of all things and continues to be present and active in the work of the Kingdom of God among us. God continues to speak to us through the Son who “reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.

**Cleaning Crew Needed**



**Caring Loving Eager Ambassadors Needed.....Our**

**THANKS** to all the Ambassadors who helped house clean the sanctuary. Jan DuBois needs a **hug** and **thank you** from all of us, for cleaning our Organ! **NEW AMBASSADORS** always appreciated.



**Many Eager Ambassadors Lending Service.....**

Do you know anyone coming home from the hospital at Friedens, who will be homebound for one or two weeks and in need of meals? Please call Joanne at 717-628-1211 to schedule the meals. **THANKS!**



## Food Collection

On Sunday, December 4, food will be collected for the Lebanon County Food Bank. All gifts are welcomed. There is a need for instant mashed potatoes, canned potatoes, cold cereal, 18 oz. jams & jellies, 5 oz. canned chicken, 12 oz. Spam, toothpaste, toothbrushes and toiletries. Please place your contributions in the narthex.



This year we celebrate Christmas Eve at 4 P.M. with a Contemporary Worship and a Traditional Worship Service beginning with a prelude at 7:00 P.M. and lasting until 7:30 P.M. Included in the prelude will be the handbell choir along with several soloists on the French horn, trumpet and flute and violin, along with piano and organ music.

### NOTES FROM THE PRAISE & WORSHIP DIRECTOR

Calling all kids! Calling all kids! The Praise & Worship Band is looking for children between the ages of 4 and 10 who are interested in singing and want to lend your voices in worship at the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. Rehearsals will be held on the following Wednesday evenings from 6:00-6:30 pm in the sanctuary: November 30, December 7, December 14, and December 21. We will also rehearse for a short time during Children's Church on Sunday mornings at the 9:00 AM Service. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to call Gloria Tice at 228-3663.

Are you comfortable with computers? If so, the Contemporary Service needs people who are interested in creating and running the computer during the 9:00 a.m. Service. Training is available. Please help support the church's mission and offer your time and talents as a visual worship leader. For more information regarding how you can help, or where to even start, please contact John Tice at 269-5810.

**DECEMBER EDITION OF FRIEDENS LUTHERAN CHURCH OF YOU ARE THERE:****December 7, 1941 Vol. 15, No. 14****Missionary Society**

At the recent meeting of the Missionary Society, the treasurer reported that \$78.00 had been received as an Thank Offering. A gift of \$34.00 was sent to the India Centennial Fund in honor of one hundred years of Foreign Missions work begun in India by Father Heyer. The latter fund will be used to expand our missionary work in India.

The Society will again send Christmas boxes as follows: Turkish towels and wash cloths to the Mary J. Drexel Home of Philadelphia; toys to the Good Shepherd Home at Allentown. Those wishing to make a contribution should leave their gifts in the vestibule of the church not later than December 18.

**December 14, 1941 Vol. 15, No. 15****CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR IN THE CONGREGATION**

One more Sunday before Christmas! As we are preparing our gifts to make our friends and loved ones happier, so also we prepare our hearts during Advent to let Christ be born in us again. Many hearts are closed to the blessed Saviour of the world. We must keep our hearts open.

**December 21, 1941 Vol. 15, No. 16****USHERS FOR THE MIDNIGHT SERVICE**

The Brotherhood has appointed the following as ushers for the Midnight Service—Chairman John Marks, Assistant Chairman, LeRoy Kline, Daniel Fields, Jacob Schaffer, John Christ, Adam Schaeffer, Robert Kline, Raymond Spangler, Ralph Kline, Clarence Kline, William Phillips, Paul Kline, Paul Spangler, Phillip Tice, Wallace Uhrich, Earl Kauffman, Robert Himmelberger, Willis McKinley. In addition to these the regular Deacons of the church whose names have not been mentioned here will be ushers. All ushers will meet after the Service tonight.

**NEW YEARS EVE SERVICE 11 PM**

1941 was one of the biggest years in the history for 500 years. 1942 will be just as important for this world, probably more so. What better could we do than to see the old year out and the New Year, in God's house? Let us begin the New Year and make it happy in God's House.

**December 28, 1941 Vol. 15, No. 18****LETTER FROM THE PHILIPPINES**

A large number of friends and acquaintances of Raymond Harshbarger will be interested to learn that word has been received from him from the battle zone in the Philippines. His address or address of any other of the boys from the congregation in the army will be given to those who want to write to them.

**Friedens (Peace) Lutheran Church  
Church Council Meeting  
November 17, 2011**

Bruce Kauffman, called the meeting to order at 6:50 PM.

Present: Jody Appleby, Frank Armstrong, Greg Gardner (Vice President), Jeff Gumpert, Bruce Kauffman (Acting President) , Dottie Kemble, Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Joanne Maurer (Secretary), Pastor Miller, and Denise Noll. Excused: Bob Hauck (President).

Pastor Miller led a devotional on “Church Unity,” a Bible reading from Philippians 2:1, and the opening prayer

1. Minutes: Denise Noll motioned to accept October 20, 2011 minutes. Frank Armstrong seconded. Motion carried.
2. Reports:
  - a. Financial Secretary report from October 20, 2011 reviewed. Dottie Kemble motioned to accept reports. Jody Appleby seconded. Motion carried.
  - b. Treasurer reports from October 20, 2011 reviewed. Jody Appleby motioned to accept reports. Jeff Gumpert seconded. Motion carried.
  - c. Pastor Miller asked council to pray for the Bob Bailey family, Bob Hauck family, Larry Kemble family and Charles Kieffer family.
  - d. A written report from property along with a recommendation to not renew Ken Hibshman cleaning service for 2012. Jeff Gumpert motioned to accept property’s recommendation. Dense Noll seconded. Motion carried.
3. Communications:

Thank You letter from “On Fire Youth Ministry” for contribution of \$1000.00.
4. Contemporary Worship Leader: Council received a copy of the position from Pastor Miller and it will be posted on church webpage, synod webpage, and Facebook.
5. Meeting closed with Lord’s Prayer.
6. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by  
Joanne Maurer, Council Secretary

