

NEWS & VIEWS

December 3, 2023

Volume 22 No. 12

Doylestown Mennonite Church

PASTOR'S PEN:

Welcoming the Unexpected?

We are beginning a season of Advent, a season marked by waiting, a reminder to celebrate the historical birth of Jesus but also to anticipate the second coming of Christ back to earth. The name Advent comes from the Latin "*adventus*" meaning "coming." The historical birth of Jesus was prophesied with many promises about his coming and what that would mean for the world, especially God's chosen people.

Isaiah 9:2-7, is a prophecy about the Messiah, who is called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." These words give hope for a Messiah who would bring peace and justice to the world. We are still waiting for the complete fulfillment of these promises. It is hard to wait when we live in a world that seems increasingly filled with war and trouble of many kinds. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Waiting is an art that our impatient age has forgotten," a quote written in the 1940s while he was in prison. Perhaps our impatience has grown since then! It can be hard to wait for the fulfillment of God's promises, especially if we have difficulty seeing and welcoming the coming of Christ in all the unexpected ways that Christ may be showing up. I think about the very unexpected way Christ came to earth as a baby, to a young unwed girl, probably still a teenager. I think about the upheaval in Joseph's life as he took on the responsibility of naming and parenting Jesus, having to escape to Egypt. All unexpected and not planned, but nevertheless, it opened the door for all of us to experience the salvation offered by Jesus.

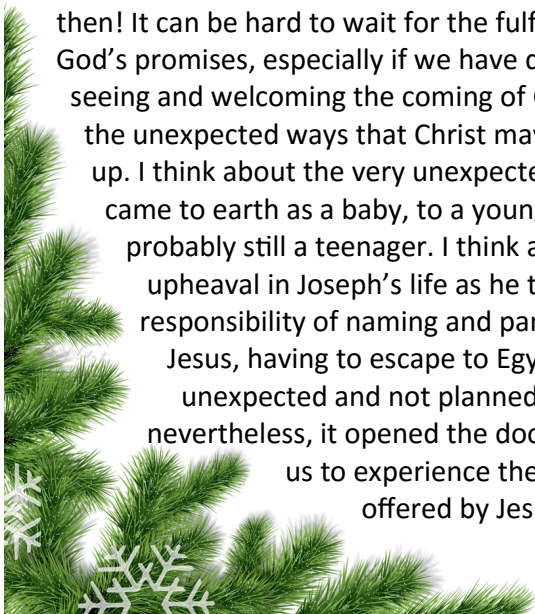
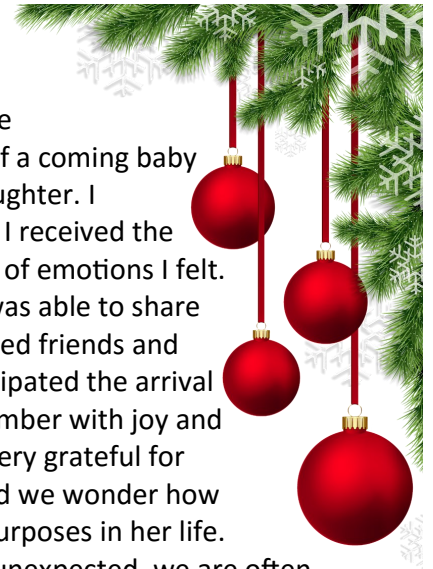
This past year our family was given the unexpected news of a coming baby to Rebecca, our daughter. I remember the day I received the news and the flood of emotions I felt. As time went on I was able to share the news with trusted friends and family and we anticipated the arrival of a new family member with joy and love. We are now very grateful for the life of Grace and we wonder how God will fulfill his purposes in her life. When we face the unexpected, we are often caught off guard and not sure how God is at work.

As Jesus was born into his family and grew up, I imagine there were many unexpected events along the way, leading to his death and resurrection. I wonder if Mary especially felt some of the tension of not knowing what would happen next?

Here in this current season of Advent, we are invited to wait and look for the coming of Christ in unexpected ways. What are the ways that you have experienced Christ coming to you and your circumstances in the past that were unexpected, but brought hope and transformation? We may not always welcome the unexpected, but what does it look like to have a welcoming heart open to Christ in the surprising ways Christ may come to us?

As we continue in the season of Advent, may we each grow in our awareness of the amazing ways God breaks into this waiting world and shines the light of his love to all.

- Pastor Sandy



COMING UP ... SOME SPECIAL DATES

Birthdays

Kathy Heckler 12/13

Blanche Althouse 12/22

Robert Schwabe 12/25

David Santopietro 12/29

MaryEllen Schade 1/1

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving was different this year. We gathered around tables in the fellowship hall for a light meal. At our table we lit a candle to represent God's presence and read a psalm. As we ate, we shared stories of our experiences and God's faithfulness. During dessert we were invited to be thankful for what we experienced together.



KAREN'S PLACE COFFEEHOUSE

The last Karen's Place event of the year was the appearance of Chip Mergott on December 2. It will resume again with an event on January 6.

FROM THE CARE TEAM

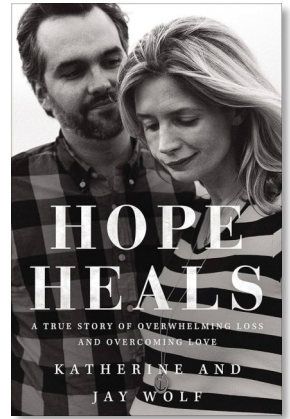
The Care Team (Sandy Landes, Randy Heacock, Aimee Gourley and Freida Myers) met via Zoom on November 14. Our scriptural focus was II Corinthians 12:5-10, in which the Apostle Paul talks about his "thorn in the flesh" which keeps him from being conceited. Although he prayed for relief from his physical ailment, the Lord told him, "My grace is enough for you, because power is made perfect in weakness." We finished reading Strong and Weak by Andy Crouch who reports taking a risk on a ropes course even though he was fearful. His friend coached him until he made it to the top of the shaking pole. He said, "We needed someone who had already gone where he was asking us to go." Only those who take risks really have authority, the ability for meaningful action and flourishing. Those who lose their life will find it. We concluded with prayer for individuals in our congregation. Persons with a special request may ask us to pray with them during one of our meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 5 at 7:15 pm via Zoom.

- Freida Myers for the Care Team

Christmas In the Library

Book review: Hope Heals by Katherine & Jay Wolf

This is a true story of overwhelming loss and an overcoming love. This couple had big dreams: Jay was almost thru law school and Katherine just had a baby boy, now 6 months old. Without warning, Katherine suffered a massive brain stem stroke. Family, church and community helped this young couple by caring for their baby, bringing meals, doing housework and encouraging them to trust God and walk with Him.



After being in the hospital for two months (and having surgery that eventually added up to 11 different procedures) Katherine was moved to an inpatient facility for intensive brain rehabilitation and PT. It was a long time before she could swallow real food. One of her biggest disappointments was Thanksgiving Day, Katherine's favorite holiday. She sat in their living room in a wheelchair while everyone else celebrated by cooking or playing with her son. She wondered if God made a mistake. Should she have died? Suddenly, Katherine felt a deep awakening. God met her in the messiness of her life and a new determination, called HOPE.

One day at a time, Jay and Katherine learned, not to hang out in a place of fear, but to cling to something meaningful beyond anything you know or understand. That happened, and Hope Healed.

- Mary Leatherman

Come and visit the Christmas collection on loan from Judy Derstine: Christmas stories to warm your heart and brighten the season. Additional "Christmas" books from our regular collection, including books by Max Lucado and Thomas Kinkade, are on the Christmas shelf for your checkout. Judy or I will be glad to help you find something you would like.

- Freida Myers, Librarian

PARTING THOUGHT:

Be still my soul! For God is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain:
Leave to your God to order and provide
Through every change he faithful will remain
Be still my soul, your best, your heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

- Catharina von Schlegel, 1752

**Deadline for
submitting items for the
January News & Views:
DECEMBER 26, 2023**

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