

## WHAT CAN'T WAIT...

### Advent and Christmas Preparations, Celebrations and Events



#### ADVENT DECORATING

Monday, December 2, at 6:30 p.m.

Set up the large tree in Greeting Hall and tree in the children's wing  
TALL assistance especially appreciated!

Wednesday, December 4

Tree decorating before, during and after the Wednesday Night Meal - all welcome!  
Final prep will be done on the stars for the Bridgewater Christmas Parade float.

Friday, December 6, at 9:30 a.m.

Decorating for Advent and wreath making - volunteers and helpers welcome!

Saturday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m.

Decorating for Advent continues - volunteers and helpers welcome!

#### BRIDGEWATER CHRISTMAS PARADE

Saturday, December 7, at 10:00 a.m.

Our parade float will feature songs from the Children's Christmas Musical.

#### LIBRARY CHRISTMAS TREE

Wednesday, December 11, around Choir and Orff time

There will be a Christmas tree set up in the library that families are invited to help decorate. You'll be able to string popcorn and make ornaments. You can also bring a favorite book to share with a friend.

#### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

"Carriers of the Light"

Sunday, December 15, during Worship at 11

#### CHRISTMAS TENEBRAE

Sunday, December 22, at 7:00 p.m.

A time of worship and contemplation for those who find it difficult to relate to the joyful and festive mood of the Christmas season.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

Tuesday, December 24, 7 p.m.

A worship service in candlelight – hear the story. Sing the carols. Listen to the music.  
Celebrate once again the love of God known through Jesus!  
Invite your family and friends to join you in this sacred time.



## SPECIAL HOLIDAY ENVELOPES INCLUDED IN THIS MAILING

TWO envelopes are included in this newsletter mailing:

The white envelope is for our Tree Lights of Love—gifts benefitting the decorating fund in honor or memory of a loved one. Tree Lights of Love gifts need to be returned by Wednesday, December 18, to be included in the bulletin on December 22. Cost of each Light of Love gift is \$5.00.

The green envelope is for our Christmas offering:

A traditional part of our congregation's Christmas celebration is receiving this special offering to support selected needs. This year the Christmas offering will be received on Sunday, December 15. The Board of Administration approved that the 2019 Christmas offering be divided equally among the work and service of the following:

### **Bridgewater Church of the Brethren Ministry Partners**

Our mission and ministry partners include the following: Church of the Brethren, Bethany Seminary, Shenandoah District, Brethren Woods, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater Home, Inc., and On Earth Peace.

### **Harrisonburg Rockingham Free Clinic**

This program provides medical services to local persons who cannot otherwise afford health care from other providers.

## YOUTH MINISTRY TRANSITION AND INTERN

On December 31, Clarke and Hope Staton will conclude their service as Youth Ministry Coordinators at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. Over the past six and a half years, the Statons have become more than mere program coordinators – they have become spiritual guides and mentors for our youth. Thus, while we celebrate their decision to move to Richmond, IN to pursue their calls to ministry at Bethany Theological Seminary, we also lament the loss of their leadership for our youth. To recognize Hope and Clarke's service and celebrate the next step of their journeys, please join us for a reception after 11 o'clock worship on December 15.

While we are still discerning a long term leadership plan for our Youth Ministry, and accepting that it is impossible to replace the depth of leadership and relationship that we are losing, be assured that we are doing everything possible to ensure that our youth will continue to have ample opportunities for fellowship, service, spiritual growth, and meaningful relationships. To that end, the Board of Administration acted in their final meeting of 2019 to call Kasey Carns, our current ministry intern, to the position of Youth Ministry Intern beginning January 6, 2020. Given Kasey's role as an intern during this fall semester, she is already familiar with our congregation, staff, and many of our members, and has already invested in beginning relationships with our children, youth, and families. As such, she will be a valuable asset in continuing our youth ministry programming through this school year. She will be working with Pastor Chris, along with other advisors and parents, to make this time of transition in our youth ministry as smooth as possible for us all.

## PASTORS / STAFF SCHEDULES

The church office will be closed December 23-January 3. Some staff will be in and checking messages during that time. If you have pastoral needs please contact Interim Pastor Christy by leaving a message at the office or calling her at home (1-814-599-6307).

Pastor Chris will be off taking holiday and vacation time December 20-28 and December 30 thru January 5.

## SHENANDOAH VALLEY CHORAL SOCIETY CONCERTS

The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society, under the direction of Curtis Nolley, will present its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Christmas concert on Friday, December 13, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, December 15, at 3:00 p.m., in our sanctuary. The concert will feature John Rutter's "Magnificat" accompanied by the SVCS Chamber orchestra and guest soloist, Anne Wick. The second half of the concert includes a variety of new and traditional carol settings highlighted by the premier of a new arrangement of the French carol "Patapan" by the nationally known composer Howard Helvey, commissioned in celebration of SVCS's anniversary year.

Tickets are available at the door, locally from Choral Society members, Red Front Supermarket, Bridgewater Foods, and on-line at [www.singshenandoah.org](http://www.singshenandoah.org). Admission is \$15 for adults/\$12 for seniors and students.

## THANK YOU NOTES

*I would like to thank each one for their cards, concerns, and prayers during my heart surgery and time in the hospital. Kindness and love mean so much at this time of recovery. Special thanks to Pastor Christy for her thoughtfulness and kindness. Blessings to all,*  
*Sheldon Propst*

*Many thanks to everyone who contributed items, money, time, and energy to the College Care Package Project this year. Because of your generosity, we were able to prepare, distribute, and mail out over 75 packages to students in Bridgewater and around the country! We are grateful also to those who came out to Jalapeños last month to support the fundraiser for our campus ministry, Brethren Student Movement (BSM). The support and generosity of this congregation is truly a blessing that does not go unnoticed!*  
*~Chris Zepp*

## 2019 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL: *Ready*

By Frank Ramirez

The Christmas story is a great drama with colorful characters and surprising plot twists. But the original scene two thousand years ago may bear little resemblance to your nativity set at home. Get ready to learn something new, to see the One who came to us in human flesh in new light. Get your copy of the devotional booklet from the literature rack in the greeting hall.

## WORSHIP SERVICES

8:30 & 11:00 a.m. on Sundays

What can't wait ....

December 1 .... **Peace Can't Wait**  
Preaching: Christy Dowdy  
Scriptures: Isaiah 2: 1-5 & Matthew 24: 36-44

December 8 ... **Hope Can't Wait**  
Preaching: Christy Dowdy  
Scriptures: Isaiah 11: 1-10 & Matthew 1: 1-17

December 15 ... **Joy Can't Wait**  
Children's Musical—"Carriers of the Light"  
Scriptures: Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11

December 22 ... **Love Can't Wait**  
Preaching: Christy Dowdy  
Scriptures: Isaiah 7: 10-17 & Matthew 1: 18-25

**Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service**

Monday, December 24, 7 p.m.

A worship service in candlelight – hear the story. Sing the carols. Celebrate once again the love of God known through Jesus! Invite your family and friends to join you in this sacred time.

December 29...**I Can't Wait**  
Preaching: Chris Zepp  
Scriptures: Isaiah 63:7-9; Matthew 2:13-23

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP MEALS

December 4: Prepared by Palmer Lee Berry  
Menu: Beef Stew, Mac & Cheese, Mashed Potatoes, Chicken Nuggets, Cookies, Hot Chocolate

December 11: Prepared by Papa John's Pizza  
Menu: Cheese & Pepperoni Pizzas, Fruit, Veggie Tray, Chips

Cost for each meal: \$10 adults / \$5 kids

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Bridgewater Area Inter-Church Food Pantry is looking for volunteers to assist with the following tasks:

- \* setting up and taking down tables and chairs for bi-monthly food pantry meetings
- \* pushing carts for pantry clients and assisting with loading groceries into vehicles
- \* picking up donated food at least once a month from participating grocery stores
- \* other tasks as needed

If you'd like to learn more or would like to sign up, please contact Clara Metzler at 830-3228 or [cmetzler@eagles.bridgewater.edu](mailto:cmetzler@eagles.bridgewater.edu).

## BITS AND PEACES

[brought to you by Peace Committee and Mission & Service Commission]

Peace embraces all of life. It includes personal peace with God, peace in human relations, peace among races and nations, and peace with the whole of God's creation.  
~ "Commentary" on *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.

~ Hebrews 13:1, NIV, adapted

## FROM THE INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

December is the time in between the end of one year and the beginning of the next. With the church calendar, we begin a new year in December with the Advent season. Whatever season we name it, we know this season at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren is a season of transition. Even though many of you have lived through many transitions in life, surely most of you could name the uncertainties of that in between time.

I clearly remember the Advent season when Dale and I announced our first pregnancy. It was an exciting time, but certainly a season of wondering, questioning, and nervousness as we pondered just what it might mean to anticipate the coming months. Since Dale worked as a hospital chaplain with Obstetrics and Gynecology in a large Chicago hospital at the time, we were well aware that not every pregnancy brought forth joy and new birth. Thus, we lived with great anticipation, alongside a sense of unknowing and (honestly) with some fear. We are very thankful to be able to tell you that Mark was born the following August as a healthy, 8 lb. 9 oz. baby boy.

As we travel this interim journey together, I am sure there will be times of wondering, questioning and nervousness as we work together to prepare for a new pastor and new chapter of ministry. The journey is not a straight road, but may be traveled through some wilderness stretches, as we discern how God might be calling the congregation to prepare for a "new thing."

As part of that work, I proposed a "transition team" at the most recent board meeting. The Board passed that recommendation, and you can read about it below and help to call out persons who might be willing to engage in leading the important work ahead. You are encouraged to discern, pray and ask persons to consider being nominated to share their time and gifts to be part of the transition team. (Nomination forms will be available in coming bulletins, and in the greeting hall literature rack).

Advent is a time of "active" waiting. May our prayers continue for this time of transition, discovery, and wisdom as we prepare for the work God is doing among us.

In Christ's love,  
Christy Dowdy, Interim Senior Pastor

## TRANSITION TEAM FOR BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN FOR 2020

### The Interim Time:

- A time of high challenge for the congregation
- This time of discovery heightened because of the broader current church culture
- A time for self-assessment
- A time for visioning and articulating mission and ministry identity

### Overall goal:

- Bring the congregation to the best health, unity and readiness to move forward under the leadership of a new pastor.

### Team make up:

- 6-8 Active members, who represent a cross section of the congregation's attendance/membership
- Team will be facilitated by Interim Pastor Christy Dowdy
- Committed to a minimum of monthly meetings for minimum of 12 months, to begin early 2020; it is hoped the team will remain in place through the first year of a new pastor's term of service.

### The Work of the Team:

- Exploring the history of the congregation
- To gather the feelings and ideas of both members and non-members of the congregation about BWCOB
- To provide a forum for the sharing and focusing of hopes and aspirations for the future
- Initiate information gathering process from congregation and staff
- Review recent studies: Master Plan, Youth Review, Congregational Survey of Ministerial Services
- Help to sort information concerning best staffing models for future ministry
- Interpret information to articulate future ministry focus
- Information gathered and articulated will be used for the search team
- Articulate identity
- Seek to discern: Who is God calling us to be?

## SPECIAL THANKS

We have much to celebrate! Earlier this month, we asked everyone to estimate how much you can give to the church's ministries in 2020. Thus far, we've received 119 responses, and many of you increased your estimates above 2019. **THANK YOU!** Already the dollar amount has surpassed the estimates from last year, and many are still planning to return your estimate cards to the offering plate or the church office. Your generosity ensures that the work of our congregation will continue and will grow in 2020. Thanks be to God for equipping us for the work we are called to do.



## KYLE REMNANT TROMBONE RECITAL

Kyle Remnant will present his second Doctorate of Musical Arts trombone recital on Saturday, December 14, at 4 p.m. The program includes works by Frank Gulino, Bert Appermont, Jean-Michel Defaye, Launy Grondahl, and Herbert Clarke. Kyle will be joined by Amy Robertson on piano and John Nye on Trumpet. The recital will be held in the Recital Hall of JMU's Forbes Center.

## EMMA NICHOLAS NATURE CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

October 24 of this year marked the one-year anniversary of Emma Nicholas' death by suicide. We (Kajsa, Jonathan and David) have decided to create a scholarship in memory and honor of Emma through the Nature Camp Foundation (NCF). As most of you are aware, Nature Camp was Emma's VERY special and sacred place. This is where she could be and feel the truest form of herself. Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$10,000 in the next two years. At the point the fund reaches this amount, enough money will be generated by the fund to award a half-scholarship (half of the tuition) for one camper. It would be our hope that the fund would continue to grow so that a full scholarship could be awarded in a few years and hopefully in time two full scholarships. The Counselors and Nature Camp will choose a recipient (an outstanding camper) who embodies the qualities that Emma exhibited: living life to its fullest, standing strong in convictions and beliefs, showing a love for environmental science and conservation, having a good sense of humor, being passionate about bringing beauty and meaning into the lives of others, & displaying a love for the arts such as drawing, writing, music and theater.

Anyone interested and willing to contribute to the Emma Nicholas Nature Camp Scholarship Fund can make contributions directly to NCF online at <https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/give/> Please make sure to chose the "In Honor of/ In Memory of" section and follow the instructions carefully.

You may also send contributions by mail to:

The Nature Camp Foundation  
P.O. Box 265, Studley, VA 23162

*[Please identify that your contribution is in honor of/ in memory of Emma Nicholas.]*

**Be The Change**

## **BWCOB DECEMBER 2019** **EVENTS PROGRAM CALENDAR**

This is a church-related program calendar and does not include all building use. Please be sure to schedule ALL EVENTS and building use through the church office. All events are at BWCOB unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 Bell Choir Rehearsal – 9 a.m.  
Children's Worship during Worship at 11  
Youth Fundraiser Lunch – Noon – Social Hall  
Sr. High Movie Night – 5 p.m. – Zepp's
- 3 Childcare Exploration – 7 p.m.
- 4 Wednesday Night Meal – 5:30 p.m.  
Cherub Choir Rehearsal – 5:30 p.m.  
Carol Choir Rehearsal – 6 p.m.  
Yorff Choir Rehearsal – 6:45 p.m.
- 5 BSM – 6 p.m. – Carter Center  
Puppets Rehearsal – 7 p.m.  
Sanctus Choir Rehearsal – 7:30 p.m.
- 8 Bell Choir Rehearsal – 9 a.m.  
Children's Worship during Worship at 11  
Youth Chillax – Noon
- 11 Staff Meeting – 3:15 p.m.  
Altruistic Class Social – 5:30 p.m. – Maple Terrace  
Wednesday Night Meal – 5:30 p.m.  
Cherub Choir Rehearsal – 5:30 p.m.  
Carol Choir Rehearsal – 6 p.m.  
Yorff Choir Rehearsal – 6:45 p.m.
- 12 Puppets Rehearsal – 7 p.m.  
Sanctus Choir Rehearsal – 7:30 p.m.
- 15 Bell Choir Rehearsal – 9 a.m.  
Blood Pressure Clinic – 9:30 & 10:30 a.m.  
Reception for Clarke & Hope Staton – Noon  
Youth Christmas Party – 4 p.m.
- 19 Sanctus Choir Rehearsal – 7:30 p.m.
- 22 Bell Choir Rehearsal – 9 a.m.  
Service of Tenebrae – 7 p.m.
- 24 Christmas Eve Worship – 7 p.m.
- 23-Jan 3 Church Offices Closed  
– Christmas Holiday/Vacation

## **OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS**

- 3 Bridgewater Interchurch Food Pantry – 7 p.m.
- 4 Salvation Army Bell Ringing – 12-7 p.m. – BFS
- 5 Salvation Army Bell Ringing – 9 a.m.-7 p.m. – BFS
- 6 Salvation Army Bell Ringing – 12-7 p.m. – BFS
- 7 Bridgewater Christmas Parade – 10 a.m.
- 8 InMotion Dance Recital – 4 p.m.  
Lovelight Service – 7 p.m. – BRC Lantz Chapel
- 9 Retired Ministers & Spouses – Noon – Maple Terrace
- 11 Bridgewater Ministers – 8 a.m. – Maple Terrace
- 13 Shen. Valley Choral Society Concert – 7:30 p.m.
- 15 Shenandoah Valley Choral Society Concert – 3 p.m.
- 16 Blue Ridge Christian School 6-12 gr Concert – 6 p.m.
- 17 Blue Ridge Christian School K-5 Concert – 6 p.m.  
Bridgewater Interchurch Food Pantry – 7 p.m.



## For Our Prayers during the Month of December 2019

Each month a prayer list with opportunities for directed prayer is included with our newsletter. In addition to highlighting specific prayer requests, we are invited to pray with particular mindfulness of the persons connected with our congregation and community. Additionally, focusing thoughts and prayers around the following may be helpful as a guide:

### *Our Congregation and its Ministries, Vision and Mission*

#### *Those who are...*

Undergoing significant life changes

Living with illnesses, both chronic and acute

Seeking employment and who have lost work

Traveling

In difficult relationships or experiencing the loss or lack of relationship

Struggling with mental illness, anxiety, depression and/or thoughts of suicide

Criticized, belittled and demeaned because of their beliefs and understandings

Survivors, Victims, Witnesses, and Perpetrators of violence, intolerance, racism and hatred

Advocating for justice and righteousness

Wrestling with their faith

Facing financial hardships

Finding peace and contentment

### *We also lift up in prayer and mindfulness specifically...*

...*Our Nation and World*

...*For those who will travel this Christmas season ....*

...*For the thousands of persons fleeing from the country of Syria, as the US withdrew from*

...*For the tens of thousands of migrants applying for asylum in Mexico, because the US will no longer be a possible place of refuge for them*

...*our Congregation, District, and Denomination*

...*Jeff Carr and family as they continue to make adjustments and embrace a new season in their life together*

...*those who grieve, especially the families and friends of...*

*Ernie Barr*, brother of *John Barr*, who died November 24

*Sam Flora*, husband of *Lillie Ann* & father of *John*, who died November 18

*Thelma Studebaker*, aunt of *Ann Anderson*, who died October 29; *Cindy Kasten*, mother of *Bart Kasten*, who died October 22; *Ralph Shively*, who died September 19

... *those under the care of Hospice, Palliative Care and Comfort Care*

... *those who recently have had surgery, been hospitalized, are receiving treatments, are recovering from illness or are in rehabilitation, specifically ...*  
**Pat Compton**

... *those receiving treatments for cancer...* **Lynne Brumbaugh, Betty Wayman (mother of Claire Wayman)**

... *those requiring long-term healthcare, specifically those at...*

**Curis of Harrisonburg, Bridgewater Home, Harrisonburg Health & Rehab, & Sunnyside**

... *those taking classes from Bethany Theological Seminary, specifically...*

**Sharon Flaten (Jos, Nigeria), Clarke & Hope Staton (Staunton VA)**

... *those in Volunteer Service, specifically...* **Ben Neher (Greeley, CO)**

... *those in Military Service, specifically...* **Tyler Hopkins, Kent Hutchinson**

... *those who are requesting prayer specifically or have been on the prayer chain recently*

**Hauwa Abdu, 1 of over 200 girls & young women kidnapped in Nigeria in April 2014**

**For these and all God's Children we pray...**

