

New Holland Mennonite Church

January 5, 2025 • Volume 70, No. 1

Fellowship: 8:30 a.m. • Sunday School: 9:00 a.m. • Worship: 10:00 a.m.



Gathering & Praising God

O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem (VT 275) Jenn Esbenshade
Call to Worship / Candle Lighting Jen Morales
Prayer for Illumination
What Child Is This? (VT 267)

Hearing God's Voice

Conversation with Children Steven Lantz
"The Journey" written by Rev. Anna Strickland
based on Matthew 2:1-12
Scripture: Isaiah 43:16-21
Sermon: "The Road Isn't Straight" John Denlinger *

Responding

Prayer of Confession & Words of Forgiveness
To Us A Child of Hope is Born (VT 259)
Prayer of the People / Lord's Prayer Jenn Esbenshade
Announcements

Sending

God, Be the Love (VT 43)
Benediction

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

* John Denlinger grew up on a dairy farm as the oldest son of eight children. His formal education included Conestoga Valley High School, West Chester University, The Ohio State University and Eastern Mennonite Seminary. John taught and coached at Hempfield High School and Eastern Mennonite University before pastoring at Mellinger Mennonite Church and Ridgeview Mennonite Church. John served as the Executive Director at Laurelville Mennonite Retreat Center and Director of Church Relations and Development Associate at Lancaster Mennonite. John currently works part time at Mennonite Life Visitors Center. John is married to Debbie for forty-eight years and they have three married adult children and six grandchildren. They attend Ridgeview Mennonite Church. Their hobbies include flower gardening, enjoying the mountains and the beach and motorcycling in the countryside.

Coffee/Greeter: Pat Thomas; **Close:** Steven Lantz
Sound: Kai Esbenshade; **Nursery:** Danika Snader
Offering: Wade Esbenshade & Lois Zimmerman

NOTE: Attendance and Offering updates for December 29, January 5, and January 12 worship services will be in the January 19 bulletin.

NEXT SUNDAY: January 12

Coffee/Greeter: Judy Schweitzer; **Close:** Mike Bortzel
Song Leader: Kelsey Means; **Children's Time:** Michele Good
Worship Leader: Sue Martin; **Sound:** Mike Good
Sermon: Caleb Simmer; **Prayer:** Dawn Ranck-Hower;
Offering: Wanda Gonzalez Bortzel & Brenda Martin Hurst

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

All events are at New Holland Mennonite Church unless otherwise indicated
Vacation: Pastor Dawn and Bryan are visiting friends in Singapore and Cambodia from December 25 through January 11. Ruth Douglas Miller and Dawn Kaczor are available for pastoral care. Please pray for traveling mercies for Bryan and Dawn.

Friday, January 24, Book Club: 7 p.m. At Pat Thomas house.
Led by Dawn Ranck-Hower Book: *All That She Carried*.

Saturday, February 1: Church Fondue Game Night! 5 p.m.
Sign up link provided in weekly email.

Sunday, February 9: Congregational Meeting: 9 a.m.

Projected Artwork: “Joseph’s Dream”

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 1:18-25

Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on patterned paper

The angel holds Joseph as his dream unfolds in quilted vignettes. At the top, Mary gazes ahead, pondering her role in welcoming the Son of God into the world. Below, a squishy baby Jesus peacefully rests as his glory shines on a longing world eager to soak up the light of Emmanuel. Just as a dream holds layers of meaning, this image reflects more than the sum of its parts.

I’m fascinated by symbology. Stars have come to represent both Mary and Jesus in liturgical art, so I decided to research stars in quilting. It turns out that quilting holds its own wealth of symbology through choices in color, shapes, patterns, etc. A star quilt holds significance in a number of different cultures, including the Lakota. Star quilts are given at important moments throughout one’s life, including birth, and the eight-pointed morning star “represents fulfillment, the release from darkness, [and] ushering in a new day.”

This brings me to another fascination of mine, Biblical numerology. One of my most well-worn resources is a glossary of common liturgical symbols in European Christian art called, Symbolism in Liturgical Art. In it, the writers describe that the eight-pointed star is often used in imagery of Christ as an allusion to the eighth day of creation when Christ rose from the dead, “a beginning of days outside of time.” It delights me that this eight-pointed star is made up of triangles with three sides. The number three references the Trinity, and therefore, the communal fullness of the Divine.

In researching imagery for Mary, I realized that both stars and lilies are often used in European art to celebrate Mary’s purity.

My glossary reads: “Her bearing of Christ without loss of her virginity is seen as similar to stars sending out their light without loss of brightness.” Of all the things we can lift up about Mary, such as her courage, strength, or steadfast love, why emphasize her virginity? This feels incredibly limiting and dismissive and misses how incredible and multifaceted Mary is. In my image, I want to reclaim the imagery of stars and lilies to represent how Mary is a brilliant, shining example of radical faithfulness in the face of every possible earthly fear. Lilies are resourceful, hearty plants which represent rebirth across cultures. I would argue that Mary is resilient in the face of an impossible task, and in many ways, the entire story of the people of God is reborn through Mary’s bravery.

— Lauren Wright Pittman

What We Value

**With Jesus as our center, we commit to
including all people,
strengthening our relationships (and)
practicing peace and justice.**

Land Acknowledgment: We acknowledge, with humility, that the land where we sit and stand today is land that was home to the Susquehannock, Shawnee, and Lenape people. Let us be aware that we occupy their homeland, and that their presence is imbued in this land.

Pastor: Dawn Ranck-Hower

Leadership Team: Wade Esbenshade, Dawn Kaczor, Ruth Douglas Miller
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