Matthew 1:21-23

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.”
Dear Woods Family,

Advent is a time of anticipation, a season when we look for the coming Christ at the end of time, and the coming of God in human form, as a child born in Bethlehem. At approximately this time last year, twenty-two Woods members and I were in Bethlehem. We lived and worshiped with the Christian community there and we experienced first-hand the need for Christ’s healing work in the world, the incarnation of peace.

Psalm 122:6 calls us to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” We pray peace for our world so conflicted and torn. As we pray this season let’s remember the angel’s words to Mary, and ask God to make our church, and each of our members, God-bearers of peace.

*The Holy Spirit will come upon you,*
*and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*
*Therefore the child you shall bring forth will be holy*

*He will be called the Son of God.*

-Luke 1:35

You and I do not literally have the ability to bring the Savior into the world. Or do we? We have the chance to be grace bearers. We can deliver the love and mercy of the Son of God to those our lives touch. We can tenderly care for the Earth he made, and present it to him as a holy offering when he comes.

This year, during each week of Advent and Christmas we will be considering the theme: Hope of the World. The hope and pain Mary experienced as God-bearer common to all men and women who attempt to share Christ with the world. Its beauty and mystery are reflected in a poem by the 20th century Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, “Mother of God.”

The threefold terror of love: a fallen flare
Through the hollow of an ear;
Wings beating about the room;
The terror of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb.

Had I not found content among the shows
Every common woman knows,
Chimney corner, garden walk,
Or rocky cistern where we tread the clothes
And gather all the talk?

What is this flesh I purchased with my pains,
This fallen star my milk sustains,
This love that makes my heart's blood stop
Or strikes a sudden chill into my bones
And bids my hair stand up?

The officers and staff of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church wish you and yours a blessed Advent. Bear Christ’s love bravely. He is the hope of the world.

In anticipation of his coming,
**Christmas Services**

**POTLUCK DINNER, BLUE CHRISTMAS, AND LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE**

*Monday, December 16, 7:00 p.m.*

This year the Blue Christmas Service at Woods Church will be proceeded by a potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m. This service is not only for those who have suffered a loss, but also for those who support and care for them. This service recognizes the reality of grief and the healing power of hope evident in Christ’s birth. Following the service, Deacons and Stephen Ministers will be available. Child care is available.

**SERVICE OF WHOLENESS**

*Wednesday, December 18*

There will be a Service of Wholeness on Wednesday, December 18, at 6:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. This is a deeply spiritual service of prayer, laying on of hands and anointing by the pastors and elders for those experiencing spiritual, emotional or physical concerns. If you would like to attend, please contact Maureen Adams at madams@woodschurch.org or call 410.647.2550.

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

*Tuesday, December 24*

**Children’s Christmas Eve Pageants: 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.**

These family-friendly services include a live re-telling of the Christmas story. Children are asked to bring canned goods or non-perishable food items. These items will be incorporated into the service and will be given to SPAN to help feed those in need in our community.

**Christmas Contemporary Service: 6:00 p.m.**

Celebrate the birth of Jesus with contemporary music led by the Woods Praise Band. The service features favorite Christmas carols and special seasonal music.

*Childcare is offered at the 6:00 p.m. service*

**Candlight Services: 8:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. (Communion)**

Pre-service music begins at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. These services of traditional lessons and carols include the Christmas story, favorite Christmas carols, instrumentals, choirs, solos, and traditional Christmas music. The Lord’s Supper will be celebrated at the 10:00 p.m. service.

*Childcare is offered at the 8:00 p.m. service*

**THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING**

The Christmas Joy Offering is shared equally by the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides critical assistance to Presbyterian church workers and their families, and Presbyterian affiliated racial ethnic schools and colleges, which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling. The offering dates back to the 1930s, when the former Presbyterian Church in the United States began an offering to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families.
Seasonal Happenings

POINSETTIAS

Sundays, December 8 and 15, after all services

Your contribution to honor or memorialize a loved one or friend may be made by visiting the Poinsettia table on Sundays, December 8, and 15. Contributions are welcome. Deadline is Monday, December 16, 2019. The cost is $20.

MESSIAH SING-A-LONG

Saturday, December 14, 3:00 p.m.

This time YOU get to sing! Woods Church will be hosting a Messiah Sing-A-Long, on Saturday, December 14 at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The church will be singing Part I of the Messiah, including the Hallelujah Chorus. The string quartet will consist of members of the Two Rivers Chamber Ensemble. Everyone is invited to come and sing this timeless masterpiece. The church will have copies of the Messiah to borrow. Bring your own copy if you have one. After the concert all are invited to the Fellowship Hall for some delicious finger-food.

WOODS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Friday, December 13, 6:30 p.m.

The King is coming! All the stable animals need to spruce up their stalls in preparation for the royal arrival. But wait: who is this baby and what is he doing here? The four-year olds of Woods CDC present their first drama production of the year, an original play written by Jeanne Fogle and an annual favorite. Suitable for children of all ages.

WOODS CHURCH CROSSES

Sunday, December 15, at 10:30 a.m.

Both small and large, gold and silver crosses will be sold in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m. on December 15 or you can come to the church office Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. These crosses are replicas of the forged iron cross hanging in our sanctuary. Any questions, contact Liz Pringle, 410.647.8914.

SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS NEED FOR FAMILY CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Tuesday, December 24, 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Calling all shepherds and angels for the Christmas Eve pageants. Children four years old and older are welcomed to be a part of this re-telling of the Christmas story. Rehearsals are Sunday, December 15 and Tuesday, December 17 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Children must attend at least one rehearsal. We will be leading the Christmas Eve services at 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. Children will need to be at church and in costume at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24 for a run through and photos. This is a great way for your child to share in telling the Christmas story. Please sign up by December 12 by contacting Holly Albrecht, halbrecht@woodschurch.org.
BIBLE BEDTIME STORY READERS
We’ve asked our families with children to switch one bedtime story for a Bible story every night. It is changing families as they share in the spiritual practice of reading the Bible together. Parents are learning the Bible stories too.

We are ready to bump things up a notch. We are looking for Bible story readers who will be videoed reading a story from a children's Bible. In January, families will be able to access these stories from our own Youtube channel. I can just imagine a child running up to Elder Gale Gillespie saying, “Ms. Gillespie, you’re the lady who read me the story of Queen Esther.” Creating family spiritual practices, increasing Bible literacy with parents and children and building relationships throughout the church - this is going to be fun! If you’re interested in being a reader please contact Dylan Roche or email Holly Albrecht at halbrecht@woodschurch.org.

THE ANNUAL ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS ART EXHIBIT
November 27, 2019 – January 5, 2020
The Gifts of Christmas
Artwork by Woods and local area artists
HOPE – PEACE – JOY – LOVE
The annual Advent and Christmas Exhibit features the work of many artists from Woods Church and the community at large. It is an “open exhibit” which means that all people of all ages were invited to submit their two-dimensional art. A wide variety of art is on display including: drawings, paintings, photographs, etc. This exhibit shows the gifts and talents of the creative.

WOODS CHRISMON TREE
Chrismons are handmade Christmas tree ornaments with various symbols of Christianity. The name Chrismon comes from a combination of CHRISt and MONogram. Some of the traditional symbols of Christianity are monograms composed of various combinations of letters of the name Christ or titles for Jesus. They are sometimes called Christograms. These monograms and other symbols, such as the sign of the fish, were in use early in the church as secret symbols of Christianity. However, they became popular in the fourth century. When the Roman Emperor Constantine, after his conversion to Christianity, adapted the Chi-Rho monogram as his military ensign. Chrismons are an innovative way to use these ancient symbols at Christmas. You’ll see the Chrismon Tree in the narthex.

DICKENS CHRISTMAS VILLAGE
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., and Christmas Eve from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
This holiday season be sure to come into the Woods Church Office to enjoy our Dickens Christmas Village on display until January 5. This beautiful collection will be available for anyone to see.
Mission Marketplace

Choose a Gift,

Change a Life...

FELLOWSHIP HALL SUNDAYS DURING ADVENT
DECEMBER 1, 8, 15 & 22

Share the love of Christ, and buy Christmas gifts that will change the lives of people who are in the heart of God, while warming the hearts of those on your gift list.

GIFTS FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

LOCAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM SPAN: Buy toys, clothing, or a Christmas food basket for local families and children referred to us by SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods). Sign-ups are in Fellowship Hall between worship services on Sundays. Items are due back no later than Sunday, December 15 at 12:00 p.m.

ELDERLY AND DISABLED FROM PINewood VILLAGE: Provide a gift basket for elderly or disabled adults in a low income housing neighborhood in Glen Burnie. Baskets are due back December 15 at 11:00 a.m. for delivery.

QUALITY FAIR TRADE GIFTS

DRINK AT THE WELL: Hon's Honey purchase products made with local honey by local women with the healing power of love. Sunday, December 8.

BENEVOLENT BASKETS: Buy beautiful gift baskets made by women in Baltimore, to support their transition from homelessness to independence. Perfect hostess gifts! Sunday, December 15.

FROM PALESTINE: Shop olive oil from Palestine. Funds will directly support individuals struggling to survive in their occupied country.

THE SAMARITAN WOMEN: Purchase biscotti and support women learning the skills of food manufacture, production, marketing, and retail. Sunday, December 22.

PALESTINIAN NEEDLEWORK: Handmade needlework by Palestinian women from Surf Village in the West Bank.
ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

- Alternative gift catalogs and order forms are available at church and on the church website.
- To make a donation online via credit card, go to www.woodschurch.org/mission and select give now.
- Pick up alternative gift cards on Sundays during Advent. Gift donations will be taken until December 22.

CECILIA MCKAY GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND

The Cecilia McKay Good Neighbor Fund was established at Woods in 1952 to memorialize Cecilia McKay, who was a good neighbor and friend to everyone. This fund provides an important resource for the church to respond to individual or family emergency needs of our congregation, staff, and local neighbors to prevent utility cut offs, evictions and other financial crises.

CUBA PARTNERSHIP

Our church partner, Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, is a small yet vibrant and growing congregation providing significant life-giving outreach in their community. Donations will support items desperately needed to assist this church's ministries.

GUATEMALAN PARTNERSHIP - CEDEPCA

CEDEPCA, the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America, is an educational institution in Central America that works to transform lives and realities by offering education, accompaniment, and safe reflection spaces to women and men of diverse Christian traditions and communities.

LANGTON GREEN COMMUNITY FARM

Langton Green, Inc. provides residential and support services to 110 adults with disabilities in Anne Arundel County. Each person supported by Langton Green can choose from a variety of opportunities to experience a meaningful day based on his/her need and desires. Langton Green provides a lifetime of skills and supports, and choices for people with wide ranging disabilities.

MINISTRY OF HOPE-MALAWI

This Christ-centered, community-based Malawian non-profit is committed to making a difference in the lives of orphans and widows by ministering to their physical, spiritual, and educational needs. Donations will support life-sustaining meals for thousands of orphaned children and infants, mobile medical clinics to care for children and adults, as well as educational scholarships for longer-term impact.
GOOD NEWS!

The DMC search committee is excited to announce that the Director of Missions and Communications (DMC) position has been filled by a job-share. Jeanette Kreuzburg (emphasis on communications) and Lindsey Hemelstrand (emphasis on missions) will each work approximately 20 hours per week and will be starting on January 6, 2020. Please join us in welcoming Jeanette and Lindsey to the Woods Church staff.

WINTER RELIEF 2020

Winter Relief is coming again next month. This winter there will be only one week of taking care of the homeless, January 6 - 13, 2020. Sign-ups will start on Sunday, December 8. You can go to Fellowship Hall after each service or go online to woodschurch.org/missions and sign-up there. There are opportunities to make meals or assist at the church, please help us help the homeless. If you need assistance getting signed up, please call Rhonda Greubel, Rhonda.greuble@verizon.net or call 410.703.1653. If you want more information about Winter Relief and how you can help, please contact Scot Wiley, wilecoy2us@gmail.com or call 410.353.1491

Adult Ministry
by The Rev. Jacob Snowden, Associate Pastor for Education

Acts 2:42, a passage that describes the Pentecost beginnings of the early church, claims the disciples devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching. As you consider your own discipleship and the ways that you grow in faith, won’t you consider the following Christian Education opportunities?

The soft-fallen snow and gentle carols of Christmas can certainly make the cold, quiet season of Christmas feel serene; yet you might question how many expectant parents feel the warm fuzziness on the eve of their deliveries. This Advent Season, consider a Christian Education opportunity, “Not a Silent Night.” Guided by DVD from Adam Hamilton and your conversation, consider the meaning and history of the first Christmas. Imagine how the complexity and stress of the first Christmas might shape how you imagine the season and your engagement in the world. Classes are at 9:30 in the office conference room.

You know him as the warm, if slow-speaking grandpa from television, now played by Tom Hanks. Consider the life and faith of Mr. Rogers, the Presbyterian minister who had a children’s television program as his pulpit in a class that meets on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} weeks of the month on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. and Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Discover the countercultural Mr. Rogers in my class, “Peaceful Neighbor.” Explore how pacifism, vegetarianism, gender and racial equality influenced your kindly television neighbor and the implications for you.

Were you afraid of office hours, the one-on-one sessions with your college professors? Don’t be afraid of office hours with your pastors. We are here to discuss your theological and pastoral concerns at any time. Call the office to schedule time with any of the pastoral staff to discuss anything from your deep theological concerns to your pressing life situations. Call to schedule an appointment at absolutely any time.
Youth Activities

Pinewood Village Basket Delivery

Sunday, December 15, 12:30 p.m.

Deliver baskets to Pinewood Village at 12:30 p.m. and the Youth Group Christmas Party will be at 2:30 p.m.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Winter Trip Splash Lagoon and Mount Pleasant

January 17 - 19, 2020

We are taking our middle school students on a new and crazy trip up to Erie, PA! They will spend Saturday morning at the largest east coast indoor water park, splash lagoon, and then venture to the local ski/snowboard/tubing mountain, Mount Pleasant. Youth will be able to choose if they want to ski, snowboard, or tube. Different prices will be applied. Sign-up at woodschurch.org.

HIGH SCHOOL

Ski Trip Deep Creek, Wisp Resort

January 17 - 19, 2020

We are taking our high school students over to Deep Creek at Wisp Resort for the annual ski trip! Youth will be able to choose if they want to ski, tube or snowboard during the day. Different prices will be applied. Sign-up at woodschurch.org.

The Love and Sympathy of the Congregation are Extended to:

- Stacey Anderson-Milot, on the death of her uncle, James Anderson
- Rod McCaslin, and family, on the death of his Mother, and Andrew and Robbie McCaslin, and Family, Sarah Dziennik, and family, on the death of their grandmother, Mary McCaslin
- Sarah Thompson, on the death of her mother, Trish Wynkoop
- Pam Ward, and family on the death of her father-in-law, Laurence Joseph Ward, Jr.
ADVENT DATES

December

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8
- Mission Marketplace in Fellowship Hall
- Worship 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m., Theme: Peace
- Adult Education Classes, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.
- Families with Children Sunday school 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13
- Woods CDC Annual Christmas Pageant, 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14
- Messiah Sing-A-Long, 3:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15
- Mission Marketplace in Fellowship Hall
- Worship 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m., Theme: Joy
- Adult Education Classes, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.
- Families with Children Sunday school 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
- Deliver Baskets to Pinewood Village, 12:00 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16
- Potluck Dinner Blue Christmas and Longest Night of the Year Service, 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22
- Mission Marketplace in Fellowship Hall
- Worship 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m., Theme: Love
- Adult Ed Classes, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.
- Families with Children Sunday school 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

TUESDAY, CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24
- Children’s Christmas Eve Pageants, 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Christmas Contemporary Service, 6:00 p.m., Childcare available
- Candlelight Service, 8:00 p.m., Pre-service music begins at 7:30 p.m., Childcare available
- Candlelight Communion Service 10:00 p.m., Pre-service music begins at 9:30 p.m.
Christmastime at Woods Church

December 25 and 26, 2019

- The church office is closed

December 29, 2019
First Sunday after Christmas

- Service of Lessons and Carols 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. services
- Family worship (no Sunday School for Children)

January 5, 2020
Epiphany Sunday

- Epiphany Celebration 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. services