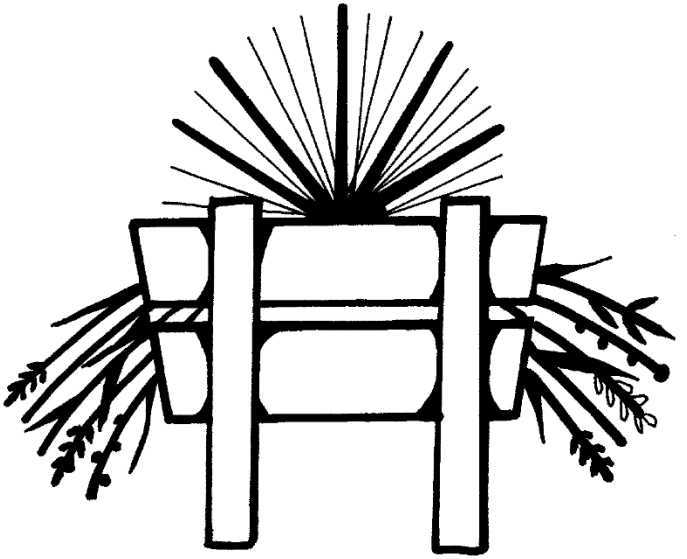


The Mystery of the Missing Manger

Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025
Sunday School Christmas Program

Regular text is spoken by the Worship Leader + **Bold text is spoken by the Congregation**
*Please stand when indicated if you are able

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, and come.
Make all things new.
For past wrongs that prevent us from moving forward:
Stir up our hearts, Lord, and make all things new.
For any lingering bitterness that scratches our soul:
Stir up our hearts, Lord, and make all things new.
For any action that has wounded us or by which we have wounded others:
Give us the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.

In this season of hope and expectation, let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence for personal reflection

God of advent,
restore our hearts with your loving presence. In this season of decreasing daylight, we confess the shadows of sin in our lives. We cling to the worldly things around us and we put ourselves above all. We often fail to serve you when we do not serve others. Free us from the power of sin and lead us to live as your holy people, in the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen
Hear the Good News: God's Son, the light of the world, was sent to free us from sin, to show God's infinite love and forgiveness for all. Jesus Christ has come into the world, has led the way through death that we may have life, and is coming again to make all things new.
Amen

*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

O God of Advent, gather us, forgive us and keep us awake as we light this circle of light. You continue to do great things for us, may we be your light in the world, serving those who look for the dawn of your justice and mercy.
You are the source of peace. Nothing is impossible with you. Amen.

* OPENING HYMN *"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"*

*Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

God of hope, you send messengers with news of the world's salvation. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst. Glory in heaven and peace on earth, now and forever.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading — Micah 5:2-5

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah.
Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.
3 The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives
birth. Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land. **4** And he will
stand to lead his flock with the LORD's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his
God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the
world. **5** And he will be the source of peace.

New Living Translation

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

New Testament Reading — James 5:7-10

7 Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits
for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the
late rains. **8** You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is
near. **9** Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be
judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! **10** As an example of suffering and patience,
brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

New Revised Standard Version

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING — Luke 1:26-38

[26] In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a
village in Galilee, [27] to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named
Joseph, a descendant of King David. [28] Gabriel appeared to her and said,
"Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

[29] Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. [30] "Don't be
afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! [31] You will conceive
and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. [32] He will be very great and will be
called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor
David. [33] And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

[34] Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

[35] The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High
will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of
God. [36] What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People
used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth
month. [37] For the word of God will never fail."

[38] Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come
true." And then the angel left her.

New Living Translation

Word of God, come down to us.
Thanks be to God.

DEVOTION

HYMN ***"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM"***

"Ready for Christmas"

Setting the stage in a holiday way, there's a big celebration in store.
All of the glimmer, the Chrismassy shimmer, With signs of the season galore.
So unpack the boxes and hang up the lights, set up the manger for one holy night.
We'll deck the halls and get ready to sing, to honor the birth of our King.
Let's get ready for Christmas.
When we all gather, the one thing that matters is all the good news we will tell.
How shepherds and wise men and angels remind us that Jesus is Emmanuel.
Joy to the world the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King.
Let's honor the birth of our King.
We'll deck the halls and get ready to sing
to honor the birth of our King.
Let's get ready for Christmas!
Let's get ready for Christmas!
So let's all get ready for Christmas!

Scene 1

"Something's Very Wrong"

Soloists: Audra Pinter, Jocelyn Thompson

Ding dong! Ding dong!
Sing the something's wrong song.
There's something going on and there's something very wrong About what's happening here.
Something's very, very wrong.
There's something going on and there's something very wrong and the reason's unclear.
The manger has gone missing and we've got to find it now, 'cause Christmas isn't Christmas if you've only got a cow.
It's a serious, mysterious mystery when you're miss<u></u>ing this important part of history.
Nothing in this story's gonna make much sense,
Since Jesus is the one who makes the difference.
And Christmas won't be Christmas till He's back where He belongs!
Yes, something is so very, very wrong!
Maybe someone took it, but we haven't got a clue about what's happening here.
Something's very, very wrong.
Let's just keep on looking 'cause there's nothing else to do about what's happening here.
The manger has gone missing! Where is Jesus gonna sleep?
And Christmas isn't Christmas if you've only got some sheep!
What would all the angels be singin' about?
Who would all the shepherds come to see?
Wise men wouldn't make their way to Bethlehem
if there never was a nativity!

Scene 2

"This Baby"

A long, long time ago, there were prophets who foretold
About the Savior God was gonna send.
The people waited years and years and never thought that He'd appear
The way He did that night in Bethlehem.
This Baby was the Promised One.
This Baby was the King.
This Baby is the Lord of lords
And the Prince of Peace.
Messiah the world was waiting for.
Savior, the One that we adore.
And now we celebrate
This Baby! This Baby!
He came as just a kid, and He did all the things we did
Like eat and sleep and laugh and cry and play.
But ordinary He was not 'cause Jesus was the Son of God!
And He's grow up to save the world one day!
Away in the manger no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky look down where he lay.
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Scene 3

"A Heart That Believes"

Soloists: Palmer Schnitkey, Jordyn Schmidt

I don't need a manger. I don't need the lights.
I don't need the presents to celebrate this night.
'Cause I have discovered what matters the most,
And Christmas is different now that I know.
The love of the Savior, the reason to sing.
The hope and the joy only Jesus can bring.
The best part of Christmas is easy to see
When Jesus is found in a heart that believes.
I don't need a manger. I don't need the lights.
I don't need the presents to celebrate this night.
'cause none of the things here that sparkle and shine
Compare to the wonder when somebody finds
The best part of Christmas is easy to see
When Jesus is found in a heart that believes.

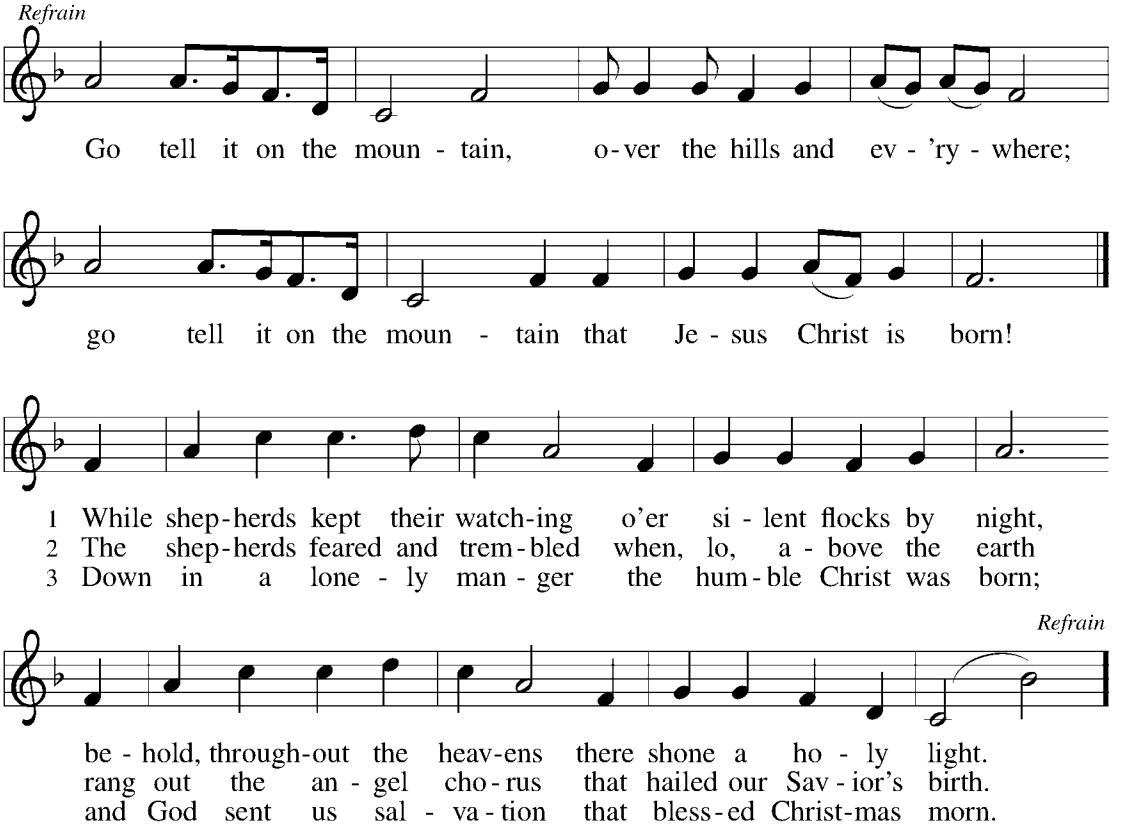
Scene 4

"When You Find What You've Been Looking For"

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.
When you find what you've been looking for,
you celebrate the good, good news.
And you tell the world that Christ was born,
Then you tell them everything He came to do,
Then you tell them everything He came to do.
'Cause you can't keep quite anymore!
No you can't keep quiet anymore!
No we won't keep quiet anymore,
since we found what we've been looking for,
since we found what we've been looking for!

OFFERING OF GIFTS

"GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN"



*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

each petition ends:

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

* BENEDICTION

In all our Advent preparations, may we remain watchful with our eyes on Christ, whose birth in a manger is but a promise of his coming again in glory.
And may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit be with us now and forever. **Amen**

*Closing Hymn *"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"*

*Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

The Mystery of the Missing Manger by Gina Boe and Dale Mathews ©2025 Brentwood-Benson Publishing

2025 Sunday School Christmas Program

The Mystery of the Missing Manger

Program Director – Jen Basselman

Preschool & Kindergarten **Teachers –** Caleb Wyse, Jen Wyse
Willa Baden, Grayson Elting, Mika Matson, Boede Wyse, Weston Wyse, Willow Wyse

Grades 1-3 **Teachers** – Jodi Grime, Susan Short, Diana Ziegler
Quinn Elting, Jessa Meyer, Ellis Poulson, Hayden Thatcher, Liam Thatcher, Ezekiel Schmidt, Khalyci Smith

Grades 4-6 **Teacher –** Jen Basselman
Owen Baden, Audra Pinter, Meyers Poulson, Palmer Schnitkey, Parker Schnitkey, Jordyn Schmidt, Emma Thatcher, Jocelyn Thompson

I would like to thank the Sunday School teachers for their hard work in preparing for this program. I also say a big thank you to Jodi Grime for the props; Darren Sonnenberg for running the sound system; the Chancel Choir for helping set the risers.

Thank you to all of the parents who bring their children faithfully to Sunday School to learn about God's love for them. And most of all, thank you to all of the children for working hard to bring us the story of Christ's birth!

Merry Christmas ~
Jen Basselman

St. Martin's Worship Servants . . .

Acolyte	- Violet Schneider
Organist/Pianist	-Matthew Wachtman
Percussion	-Mike Short
Usher Team Leader	-Mark Weaver
Sound System	-Darren Sonnenberg
Altar Guild	-Janet Wyse & Jan Delaney
Offering Counters	-Jan Delaney & Jo Ann Liechty

The St. Martin's Webstore is open! If you would like to order some apparel you can go to https://stmartinsarchbold.itemorder.com, click the link in your Friday email, or scan the QR code provided.

We are looking for people who would like to **provide the Wednesday Night meals**. Erinn Thompson is organizing this, so you can contact her if you would like to help. You can also scan the QR code provided or click the link in your Friday email to sign up!

End of Year Giving: If you would like your end of year giving to go toward 2025, please have it in to Jo Ann Liechty by December 20th.

NEW MINISTRY CONVERSATION! Jake and Pastor Steve have been having conversations with the Archbold Elementary Principal since the end of last school year. If anyone is interested in being part of developing and implementing an after-school program to provide possible tutoring assistance for students, please reach out to Jake or Steve.

The Church Directory has been up and running for a year and a half now! We are noticing it as a helpful tool for our congregation as it gets a lot of traffic week to week. We'd like to remind you that you can go online and make any changes for you and your family or contact the church office to do it for you. Any changes of address, please send to the church office so the directory and database can be updated. At the beginning of every year, the church office will update anything that we notice needs refreshed. Thank you all for your help and participation making the directory a helpful tool for our congregation.

You are invited: We will begin a **new Bible Study in January** for those who are interested in Growing Older and Wiser! **Mary Martha Circle** has selected this topic for their next study. We would love to have you join us starting on January 7th at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.
If you are interested and would like the Bible Study guide, please let Kris Jemmott know by December 15th so that the guides can be ordered.

The Annual Report is approaching! If you are someone who usually submits something to the office for that report, please do so at your earliest convenience. The deadline is typically December 31, but this year any report that can be submitted a little earlier is appreciated by the 19th! Thank you for your help with this project.

Monday Night Bible Study will continue on Zoom resuming on January 5. We finished a series on the 10 Commandments. Next will be the Apostles Creed as we continue exploring Luther's Small Catechism. Join us anytime. This is an informal discussion-based format! No previous experience required. Send Steve an email if you'd like to join.

The Chosen Zoom Study Group will have their last discussion tomorrow night at 8pm.

On December 29th the carpets are being cleaned in the fellowship hall and entryway. We ask that a group of people help clear the chairs from the hall after cookies and coffee on the 28th to prepare for this. That week following there will be no Wednesday night events on the 31st.

OUR MISSION TEAM IS READY!

We are excited to share that a team of **13 volunteers from St. Martin** will be traveling to **Puerto Rico from February 22–March 1** to help repair a home whose roof was destroyed by hurricanes. This project is coordinated through **Techos Pa' Mi Gente** ("Roofs for My People"), a local organization dedicated to restoring safe housing for families in need.

With our team assembled, we are now moving into the planning phase—booking **airfare, housing, and van rentals**. We even have photos of the home we'll be repairing.

How You Can Help

Your support makes this mission possible. Would you consider giving a gift toward the trip?

- **$100** – Groceries for the team
- **$500** – Housing for one volunteer for the week
- **$1,000** – An airfare ticket
- **$700** – Van rental

Gifts of any size are deeply appreciated. Please note *"mission trip"* on your donation so it can be directed appropriately.

Upcoming Fundraisers

The team will host a **brunch TODAY**, following the children's Christmas program. We hope you'll stay, enjoy a meal, and support our mission efforts. We also plan to host a **coffee hour** early in the new year—more details to come!

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and generosity as we prepare to serve our neighbors in Puerto Rico.

Darren Sonnenberg
Evangelism/Outreach Network

This Week at St. Martin's

Next Sunday – December 14-Advent 3-Sunday School Program
Worship, 9am
Brunch following Worship
Sunday School, 10:20am
Adult Sunday School, 10:30am
High School Youth, 10:30pm
Bell Choir @ St. Paul, 5pm

Monday – December 15
Chosen Zoom, 8pm

Tuesday – December 16
Men's Breakfast, 7am @ McDonald's
Maumee Valley Rostered Leaders Worship, 10am
Community Meal, 5pm @ St. John's Christian

Wednesday – December 17
WPW Meal, 5:15pm
Worship, 6pm
Adult Circle, 6:30pm
Catechism, 6:30pm
Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm

Thursday – December 18
Women's Breakfast Study, 7am
Bulletin Deadline, 9am
Newsletter Deadline, 9am

Next Sunday – December 21- Christmas with the Chancel Choir
Worship, 9am
Sunday School, 10:20am
Adult Sunday School, 10:30am
High School Youth, 10:30pm

St. Martin's Lutheran Church
203 S. Defiance Street Archbold OH 43502
Phone Number: 419-445-4656
Web Site: www.the-welcome-place.org
Email: stmartin@the-welcome-place.org

Office Hours:

Pastor Steve Basselman
steveb@the-welcome-place.org
Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri. morning
Tues, Wed, Thurs, afternoon
Cell Phone: 419-572-6091

Matthew Wachtman, Music & Worship
matthew@the-welcome-place.org
Tues, All Day
Wed. PM
Thurs, & Fri, AM

Jake Keil, **Youth**
jakek@the-welcome-place.org
Sun, Tues, Thurs. morning
Mon, Tues, Wed. afternoon & Sunday PM

Whitney Wyse, Office Manager
stmartin@the-welcome-place.org
Tues. 8:30-12:00 & Fri. 8:30-12

Worship Services: 9:00 am each Sunday, live broadcast on Facebook
6:00 pm each Wednesday, Informal Service

We welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7

Online Giving - Mobile Access

Mobile users can now access the giving page to set up recurring donations or make one-time donations directly from phones using this QR code.
To change or delete recurring donations you will still need to go to: **https://givingtools.com** and sign in to your account.

Last Week at St. Martin's. . .
Week of 12/7/2025, Budget and Year to Date

Operating Contributions	$9,275.01	Budgeted Weekly Operating Need	$7,329.00
Benevolence Received	$666.00	Budgeted Weekly Benevolence Need	$713.00
Other Designated Income	$3,065.00	**AS OF 11/30/2025**	
Total Income	$13,006.01	YTD Operating Received	$313,624.77
Worship: Sunday/Wed/Total	135/21/156	YTD Operating Expenses	($331,734.96)
		Net Income/(Deficit)	($18,110.19)