

# New Holland Mennonite Church

December 17, 2023 • Volume 68, No. 51

Fellowship: 8:30 am • Sunday School: 9 am • Worship: 10:00 am

## Fourth Sunday of Advent



How does a  
weary world  
rejoice? *We sing stories  
of hope*

**About the Logo:** “Two people—one radiating joy & the other wading into weariness—hold the world together.”

As soon as Zechariah’s voice returns, his first words are gratitude and blessing. He sings a story of praise for God’s protection and promise, and then he showers a blessing on his newborn son. He sings a story of hope. After Elizabeth exclaims blessings upon Mary, Mary sings: “My soul magnifies God; my spirit rejoices in God.” Mary sings about a God of liberation who pulls the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly. Mary sings a story of hope, one in which justice and joy are interwoven. As we prepare to celebrate Christ’s birth, may we also sing stories of hope, justice, and joy.

### Gathering & Praising God

*How does a weary world rejoice?*

Call to Worship

Candle Lighting

Prayer for Illumination

*My Soul Cries Out (VT 412)*

Video

Bryan Hower

Lisa & Joe Kehm

Bryan Hower

Jenn Esbenshade

### Hearing God’s Voice

Offering / Offertory

Kelsey Means

Scripture: Luke 1:57-66

Bryan Hower

Conversation with Children

Jenn Esbenshade

Sermon: “We Sing Stories of Hope”

Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

### Responding

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

Worlds of Forgiveness

*Lift Every Voice and Sing (VT 611)*

Sharing and Announcements

Ray Hurst

“Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed /  
A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctifiedart.org”

### Sending

*O Come, O Come, Immanuel (VT 210, vs. 1, 4-7)*

Benediction

Bryan Hower

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

**Coffee:** Ray Hurst; **Greeter:** Brenda & Ray Hurst; **Close:** Mike Bortzel

**Sound:** Wade Esbenshade

**Offering:** Francy Bailey & Wanda Gonzalez-Bortzel

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**December 23:** Keith Miller

### What We Value

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

(adopted February 2023)

## **Artwork on Right Wall “Embroidered Borders”**

by Nicolette Peñaranda • inspired by Luke 1:46-55  
Acrylic, ink, and mixed media collage on canvaas

Two years before the birth of Jesus, during the Pax Romana, one of the worst public executions happened a half day's walk away from where Mary grew up. She came of age during a time of occupation, more than likely unable to recall a time of true peace and liberation. Mary's song rings of a dream that not only she but her ancestors dreamed of, and she would be the one to give birth to the savior of her people.

Fast forward thousands of years and the same land where Mary grew up is still being occupied. One can imagine that the cries for liberation and the prayers for justice still ring down the streets of Bethlehem. To me, Mary's song of praise is still valid for the women of Palestine and for the people who still raise their children under the duress of war and occupation.

This image is a nod to Palestine. The background operates as a foundation, built with the colors of the Palestinian flag and with collaged scriptures that celebrate women. Elizabeth and Mary are both in Palestinian regalia but from different generations. Elizabeth, centered and holding her belly, is in an outfit inspired by a photograph of a woman from Ramallah, dated sometime between 1929-1946.<sup>4</sup> This was intended to emphasize the generational differences between the two. Mary, on the other hand, is in more contemporary Palestinian fashion. A stipple effect was used to highlight the intricacy of Palestinian embroidery in both garments.

What felt important to me is the placement of Mary and Elizabeth. Rarely does Elizabeth get to be the center of the story, as her pregnancy becomes an accompaniment piece to the birth of Jesus. But here, Elizabeth is in the foreground. She gets to be the star while Mary places her arms around her, comforting her, and proclaiming the good news of what is to come. Mary is the hope that we see in all youth.

—Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

**Pastor:** Dawn Ranck-Hower; dawn.ranck@verizon.net; 1/215/237-1485

**Leadership Team:** Wade Esbenshade, Steven Lantz

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## **Projected Artwork: “Prophecy”**

by Hannah Garrity  
inspired by Luke 1:67-80  
Oil paint, charcoal, and copper leaf on canvas

This painting engages the flow of Zechariah's prophecy. I painted in oil on canvas; the copper leaf represents God's healing love. Copper has qualities that interact with its surroundings. When coiled, it can harness electricity out of thin air. When used in body wrapping, it can support internal self-repair. When used in pots and pans, it disperses heat evenly. When used in the womb, it causes the blood to flow monthly. When used in piping, it allows clean water to flow.

Over the years, I have been drawn to taking away plastics in my artwork. It is not always possible because acrylic paint and PVC pipe are such accessible media. But the natural materials draw me in physically, emotionally. In my work, I return to copper to hold banners up, to build sculpture, to create motion, and to capture light in an installation. It is a natural material that is prevalent in buildings. You can buy it at your local hardware store.

Here, the copper represents aspects of discipleship. It represents the presence of God in our lives and our actions— the presence of God in Zechariah's prophecy and in John's life and work.

The image is inspired by waters meeting one another. This intersecting flow portrays Zechariah's words meeting John the Baptist's life. It is a crashing toward, a central meeting place, a potential energy meeting a kinetic being.

Holy Mother, your love is mighty—more powerful than all of the forces that act to barricade justice, to block righteousness. Guide us like you guided Zechariah in your ways of peace, in your strength of courage, in your acts of love. Amen. —Hannah Garrity

**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.

Bulletin Insert December 17, 2023

**NEXT SUNDAY: December 24**

**Coffee:** Sue Martin; **Greeters:** Good Family; **Close:** Tim Martin

**Worship Leader:** Dawn Ranck-Hower

**Children:** Brenda Martin Hurst; **Sound:** Bryan Hower

**Offering:** Sue Martin & Keith Miller

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

All events are at New Holland Mennonite Church unless otherwise indicated

**December 21: Longest Night Service,** 6:30 p.m.

**December 24: Christmas Brunch,** 9 a.m. / **Worship,** 10 a.m.

**January 10: Men's Dinner,** 5:30/6 p.m. Garden Spot Village

**January 12: Book Club:** *Americanah*, 7 p.m. Esbenshade Farm

**January 17: Women's Dinner,** 5:30/6 p.m. GSV

**February 11: Annual Congregational Meeting,** 9 a.m.

**December 10**

**Attendance:** 42 (3 on zoom) • **Offering:** \$9,950.00

**Church News**

**December Food Drive: Fill the “stomach” so that stomachs can be filled.** Bring food items for CrossNet Food Pantry during the month of December and put them in the large bin in the lobby. **Can we fill it to overflowing?**

**Service for the Weary: Thursday, December 21, 6:30 p.m.**

This year, many of us in the congregation have lost a loved one – a spouse, a parent, a grandparent, a friend. Others grieve the loss of a loved one in the past. For others, the loss is a loss of a dream or relationship or health. Others are grieving the world news of violence in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine.

**Bring your grief. Bring your weariness. Bring your fatigue, and allow yourself a quiet space to reflect and draw near to God. Please enter and exit the building in silence.** This is your time, you can participate as much or as little as you want. There will be no corporate sharing during the worship service.

**First Men's Dinner:** 6 p.m. at Garden Spot Village, on **Wednesday, January 10** and every second Wednesday of the month through 2024. Room is reserved from 5:30-8:00, so feel free to come anytime after 5:30. Note: Food is available to purchase only until 6:30 p.m.

**Book Club: Friday, January 12, 7 p.m.** Esbenshade Farm. Jenn will lead a discussion about *Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Please RSVP: <https://forms.gle/qsrXJ5jEa3A2sNf38>

**Community News**

**Peacemaking Initiatives in Palestine/Israel:** You are invited to hear Jonathan Kuttub, Palestinian lawyer and peace activist, speak on **Sunday, January 14, 2 p.m.**, Akron Mennonite Church, 1131 Diamond St, Akron, PA. This event is sponsored by Pilgrims Mennonite Church and Akron Mennonite Church.

Jonathan Kuttub is a well-known international human rights attorney who practices in the U.S, Palestine and Israel. He serves on the Board of Bethlehem Bible College and is President of the Board of Holy Land Trust. Jonathan was the head of the Legal Committee negotiating the Cairo Agreement of 1994 between Israel and the PLO. After graduating with his Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD) from Virginia Law School, and practicing a couple years on Wall Street, Jonathan returned home to Palestine. Jonathan is currently the executive director of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA). Jonathan is a resident of East Jerusalem, and is a partner of Kuttub, Khoury and Hanna Law Firm in East Jerusalem.

**Invitation to Common Read:** ACC's Peace & Justice Committee will host its first Common Read with a focus on Elias Chacour's *Blood Brothers*. You are invited to read the book and join conversation **every other Tuesday beginning January 16 at 7:00 p.m.** The group will meet on a video call to discuss the assigned chapters. “As a child, Elias Chacour lived in a small Palestinian village in Galilee. When tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed and nearly one million forced into refugee camps in 1948, Elias began a long struggle with how to respond. In *Blood Brothers*, he blends his riveting life story with historical research to reveal a little-known side of the Arab-Israeli conflict, exploring whether bitter enemies can ever be reconciled. This book offers hope and insight to help each of us learn to live at peace in a world of tension and terror.” Ruth and Keith moderating. Sign up: [atlanticcoastconference.net/common-read](http://atlanticcoastconference.net/common-read).