

# New Holland Mennonite Church

December 10, 2023 • Volume 68, No. 50

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

## Third Sunday of Advent



How does a  
weary world  
rejoice? *We allow ourselves  
to be amazed*

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

After Elizabeth gives birth, her neighbors and family celebrate with her. When it comes time to name the child, Zechariah affirms the name given by the angel and by Elizabeth. In that moment of affirming the promise, Zechariah’s speech is restored. Everyone is filled with awe. How often do you allow yourself to be amazed? Wonder is all around us—can we recognize it? As we learn how to rejoice in a weary world, can we live in a way that allows amazement and wonder to surprise us often?

### Gathering & Praising God

*How does a weary world rejoice?*

Call to Worship

Candle Lighting

Prayer for Illumination

*Did You Feel the Mountains Tremble*

Video

Jenn Esbenshade

Kelsey Means

### Hearing God’s Voice

Offering / Offertory: *The Stand*

Scripture: Luke 1:57-66

Conversation with Children

Sermon: “Have you heard the news? Rejoice!”

Jenn Esbenshade

Steven Lantz

Hyacinth Stevens \*

### Responding

Affirmation of Faith

*Shout to the Lord (VT 125)*

Appreciation for Steven Lantz & Lois Zimmerman

Sharing and Announcements

Prayers of the People

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

Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

### Sending

*Be Thou My Vision (VT 549)*

Benediction

Jenn Esbenshade

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

\* Hyacinth Stevens is a wife and mother of four children. She has a heart and commitment to bring the "Good News" wherever she goes. Hyacinth has served the church as a pastor, teacher, mentor, and program developer. She works for MCC East Coast as the Regional Executive Director. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education and Bible, a Master of Administration, and a Masters of Public Affairs.

### 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)

## **Projected Artwork: “What Wonder Turns Into”**

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity  
inspired by Luke 1:57-66

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

When was the last time you were truly amazed? I don't mean surprised; there is much about this world that should shock us. I mean amazed—wrapped up in wonder, absorbed in an unexpected delight.

I love witnessing the moments when my one-year-old daughter allows amazement to wash over her like a gentle rain: her jaw drops open, her eyes widen and stay fixed, and for a rare moment, she gets very still. This recently happened when she discovered the kids across the street playing basketball for the first time. Her senses have not yet grown dull to the magic surrounding her.

In this image, I wanted to capture the moment Zechariah's voice returns to him. I decided to depict only half of Zechariah's face; this miracle is not really about him, but about what happens through him. When he confirms John's name, he sheds his distrust of the angel's impossible news. His skepticism and weariness subside as he awakens to the joy in his midst. He allows himself to be amazed.

Zechariah's voice pours out of him, parting the surrounding crowd like the Red Sea, stirring each person into confusion and bewilderment. The blessing of his song spills over to his son, who is held tenderly by his mother.

Elizabeth is the only person in this scene who is not presently swept up in wonder. I believe Elizabeth has spent months allowing herself to be amazed. She was in isolation for the first five months of her pregnancy (Luke 1:24). Perhaps she needed that time to go inward—to heal from the trauma of her infertility, to trust the promise of life in her womb, to attune herself to her child. She was capsized with awe the day Mary showed up at her doorstep.

And so, when Zechariah's voice returns, Elizabeth's senses have not grown dull. Instead, her amazement has metabolized into something new: attunement for her child. It has transformed into love and deep trust. It has turned into joy. When we allow ourselves to be amazed, we might be surprised what that wonder can turn into.

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

**Coffee:** Sue Martin; **Greeter:** Tim Martin; **Close:** Tim Martin  
**Sound:** Kai Esbenshade

**Offering:** Wade Esbenshade & Brenda Martin Hurst

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**December 14:** Bob Martin

**December 16:** Sean Reese

### **NEXT SUNDAY: December 17**

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

**Worship Leader:** Bryan Hower; **Prayer:** Ray Hurst

**Song Leader:** Jenn Esbenshade; **Offertory:** Kelsey Means

**Sermon:** Dawn Ranck-Hower

**Children:** Jenn Esbenshade; **Sound:** Wade Esbenshade

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

### **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 Farn

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

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

### **December 3**

**Attendance:** 45 (6 on zoom) • **Offering:** \$2,005.00

**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; dawn.ranck@verizon.net; 1/215/237-1485

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

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## 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?**

**2024 Directory:** A reminder to view the directory online and either send corrections and an updated photo to Pastor Dawn.

**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.

For those who experience loss, the joy of the holiday season can often feel elusive and out of reach. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a “Blue Christmas” or a “Longest Night” service during the Advent season. These services are designed to provide space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the twinkle lights and holiday hustle and bustle.

***Bring your grief. Bring your weariness. Bring your fatigue, and allow yourself a quiet space to reflect and draw near to God.***

**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. The Concord Room is across the hall from Harvest Table. (Go in main entrance, turn right, go by Starbucks, keep going down the hallway until you see Harvest Table on the right. There are different stations with food and a salad bar. Buy food and join the group across the hall in the Concord Room.)

**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

**ELANCO Orchestra Concert:** (with our very own Ava, Ellie, & Jordyn!), **Tuesday, December 12, 7 p.m.**, Garden Spot High School.

**ELANCO Band Concert:** (with our very own Maggie)!, **Thursday, December 14, 7 p.m.** Garden Spot High School.

**Alive with 55 & Up:** Ridgeview Mennonite Church, **Tuesday, December 12. TBD.** Lunch served after each meeting.

**Save the Date: Stewardship University 2024: Rooted in Faith. Released for the Future. Friday, March 1, 6:30-9:30 p.m.** at Lancaster Bible College. Everence Financial will host the final Stewardship University. Workshops will include beaking the cycle of homelessness, decluttering, making Medicare an easy step, your journey of wellness, retirement, and charitable stewardship. The cost has been reduced to \$10. Register by February 16 to bring a guest for free. Register at [everence.com/StewU](https://everence.com/StewU).