

Valley Views



VOLUME 30, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 2023



Pastor Dave Shultz

Many years ago, I had a friend who worked as an executive at an area Hospital. We shared a passion for hunting, and he was telling me how he was living for the upcoming hunting season. He was looking forward to taking a vacation from work and going to camp for a week. It was a break from the daily routine of life that he was greatly anticipating. I share the same sentiment.

I also so often look forward to the coming holidays and then before I know it, they are past, and my focus then shifts to the next highlight of my year. I think I am not alone in this. I have been a pastor for almost 38 years, and I have noticed how our strong is our need for the melody and sentiment of Christmas. So strong in fact, that it is easy to miss the power of Advent, which is a gift given to aid us in preparing our souls for the wonder of celebrating God coming to be with us.

In a devotional I picked up a few years ago, the author Trevor Hudson, who has been a pastor in South Africa for over 40 years writes this in the introduction to his Advent Devotional, *Pauses for Advent*,

“I have noticed a few things about how people experience Christmas. On one hand, they yearn to celebrate the mystery of the season in a way that is meaningful, significant, and even transformative. On the other hand, they reach Christmas Day feeling unprepared and unready. Shopping, finalizing holiday plans to visit friends and family, and decorating their home gobble up the days preceding Christmas and fill them with anxiety. Christmas Day arrives, and they have not observed Advent the way they intended. Consequently, their celebration of the Christ child on Christmas Day lacks a sense of wonder.”

We miss something very significant when we rush from Thanksgiving into Christmas. The Hallmark channel gives us a month or more of movies that invite us to get lost in nostalgia, family, and coming home. I suppose there is a time for some of that. But we cannot miss the gift of time that is Advent. It is about waiting, hoping, desiring peace, searching for joy, and reaching for a love that is found only in God.

If we were to get rid of Advent, we would have to rip out half of the Bible because it is all about waiting for the one who is to come, the one for whom we hope and for whom our hearts long. It is about searching for light in the darkness as we await the promised one. If we rush into Christmas, we miss the gift God wishes to give us to cope with life when we wonder where God is and if, and when he will show up.

We need to prepare for Christmas in more than buying gifts. Take time to pause, reflect on life over the past year. What is the condition of your soul? Ask yourself, are you desiring to receive Jesus in those places in your life where you are feeling empty or are you needing Christmas so that its music and song can replace a loss of hope and joy in you?

People have always wrestled with feelings such as these. One of my favorite songs is an Advent hymn by Charles Wesley that I look forward to singing each year. "Come Thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our sins and fears release us, let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart."

Every one of us has a "longing heart." The gift of Advent takes the longing in us seriously and grants us grace to sit in it as we await and ponder anew the wonder of God coming among us and joining us in our journey.

May you have a blessed Advent this year. We all need it.

The Elimsport Christmas Village will be held on December 9, 2023 outside at the Elimsport church. The schedule of events will be posted at each church, so mark your calendar! It will be like previous years, and a sign up sheet will be at each church in November. Any questions ask Christa McCormick. Don't miss this time of fellowship with your neighbors!

Various means to keep updated:

website: evpumc.org

Face book: Elimsport United

Methodist Parish

Electronic sign at Elimsport church

email Pastor Dave: dshultz@susumc.org

email church: elimsportumc@gmail.com

Call Pastor Dave: 570-547-1162

Text Pastor Dave: 570-439-0004 (please identify yourself when texting)

Be pro-active in getting the word out to others in the church.

Please be sure to check the church website evpumc.org and Elimsport United Methodist Parish face book for up to date church news.

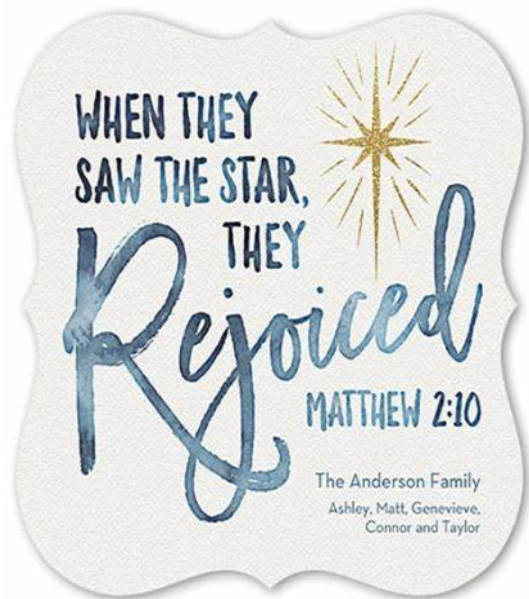
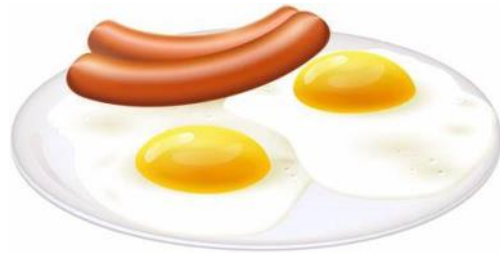
If you would like to have the monthly newsletter emailed to you, please let us know by putting your name and email address on the sheet on the table at the back of the Sanctuary.

Church News

- Items for January's newsletter are due December **20th**.
- Items for the weekly bulletin's need to be to the church office by **Wednesday morning** each week.

(Items received after these dates are not guaranteed to be printed.)

Wednesday morning breakfast at the Elimsport church is Wednesday mornings, from 7:30 am to 9:30 am.



Elimsport Ad Council meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30.



St. John's Ad Council meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:30.

Kid's Corner

Merry Christmas

Preview



ELIMSPORT VALLEY UNITED METHODIST PARISH

Worship Schedule:

Elimsport UMC

Worship 9:00 am
Sunday School 10:30 am

St. John's UMC

Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Parish Youth Group

Check weekly Bulletin for current schedule and events
(at Elimsport)

Parish Bible Study

Varies according to the season.

Parish Office:

16145S. RT 44 HWY
Allenwood, PA 17810

Parsonage Phone:

(570) 547-1162

Pastor Dave's Cell:

(570) 439-0004

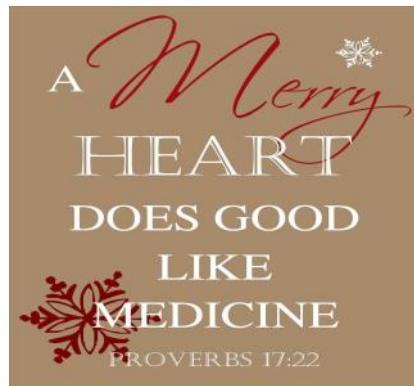
Parish Website:

www.evpumc.org

Parish email:

elimsportumc@gmail.com

www.evpumc.org



Our Mission Statement at Elimsport UMC



We gather together as a community of Christian believers to worship, fellowship, and to learn more about God. By the unity of the Spirit and the support of each other, we are able to reach out to the community and the world.

Our Mission Statement at St. John's UMC



The purpose of St. John's is to both evangelize and nurture. We are called to show God's love in our world by giving aid and by spreading the Good News of Christ. We in turn provide an atmosphere for nurturing where Biblical truths are shared enabling people to become spiritually enriched. By providing this, people will learn and through learning, become more effective witnesses.