

# The Envoy

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December, 2016

Dear Edgeboro Friends & Family,

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! You can certainly hold onto that greeting until January 1<sup>st</sup>, but I'm referring to a different date. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent on November 27<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate a new church year. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are times we focus on hope, peace, joy, and love as we recount the story of when Christ, the Light of our world, first came into our lives. With these seasons come many traditions and symbols, some of which Moravians have been using for over 250 years! You will see a lot of these symbols around Edgeboro.

Let me shed some light on some of these symbols and traditions:

The **hymns and carols** that we sing are not only memorable tunes, but powerful messages that convey what we believe about the story of Christ's birth and the love, mercy, and power he shows in his life.

The **beeswax candles** have many symbolic features. The flame represents the Light of the world breaking into the darkness. The purity of the beeswax represents Christ's purity. As the candle burns, it grows shorter, giving its life for the flame in the same way that Christ gave his life so that we may have eternal life. Years ago, after a candlelight service, people would try to keep their candle lit until they got home so they could share the flame in their homes as a gesture of their willingness to share the light of Christ with those around them.

After hundreds of years in many churches, the **Advent wreath** is still a meaningful way to focus our attention in worship on the hope, peace, joy, and love Jesus offers to us throughout our entire lives.

Though it began as a German geometry lesson in the 1800s and can be seen all over Bethlehem today in all seasons, the **Advent star** has become a permanent symbol of the light and guidance Christ first offered to us in this season.

Some Moravian churches have a **lovefeast** on Christmas Eve. Each time we have a lovefeast, we remember August 13, 1727 – the first Moravian lovefeast. On that day, in the midst of division and diversity among the people in Herrnhut, Germany, the Holy Spirit brought them together in such a way that they did not want to leave worship! When we have a lovefeast, we celebrate how much we love to worship, how much we love each other, and how much we love God.

Since its beginning, the **Putz** has always served as an important way of sharing the gospel, the greatest *good news* we will ever know, with others.

Why am I listing these things? I hope this serves as encouragement for all of us to not only enjoy the traditions that come with this season, but also to remember our beliefs as a community of faith that stand *behind* those traditions. We should not do these traditions only for the sake of doing them. Let us use these traditions to share with the world *everything* that Christ has done for us and will do for all.

May the Light of the World be with you always,

*Pastor Dan*

## Important Notes

- On Sunday, **December 4th** at 4:00PM we will hold a special Candlelight Communion service as a way of marking the beginning of the Advent season. This is one of the most meaningful and beautiful services held at Edgeboro.
- Our **Joyful Noise offering** for the month will be on **December 4**. The offering will benefit the “No Room at the Inn” program of the Moravian Open Door Ministry in New York City. Please come with lots of spare change!
- Please make sure to order your Poinsettia by **December 6th**. They will be displayed on Christmas Eve at the three services; 3:00PM, 5:30PM and 8:00PM. You can pick them up either after the 8:00PM service, after Christmas or donated them to a shut-in. The price is the same, \$6.50 for a 6” pot with 4-6 blooms.
- On Sunday, **December 4th** the Edgeboro Ensemble will practice from 12:15—1:15PM. Then on Sunday, **December 11th** the Ensemble will play before and during the two services. They will play a prelude starting at 8:45AM for the first service and they will also play starting at 11:00AM for the second service. They will also play some of the Liturgy music and some Hymns.
- On Saturday, **December 10th** there will be a congregational showing of the Putz at 7:00PM. There will be cider and sugar cake after the showing. The Christmas Room will also be open so you can do your Christmas shopping.
- On Sunday, **December 18th**, the Christmas Musicale along with the annual Sunday School Christmas program will be presented. There is only one service that day at **10:00AM**, which will have our Sunday School children and all choirs participating. You will certainly want to be here for this wonderful event.
- The **Christmas Eve Candle Services** are one of the highlights of our Church year and represents a wonderful time to invite your family and friends to experience our Church family. Please be sure to order your free tickets for the service you want to attend so that we can manage overcrowding and assure that you will have a seat. The Service Schedule is :
  - 3:00PM**—Lovefeast and Candle Service
  - 5:30PM**—Lovefeast and Candle Service
  - 8:00PM**—Candlelight VigilIf you need to order some tickets, please call the office at 610-866-8793.

- There is only one service on Sunday, **December 25th**. and **January 1st** at which the 2017 Watchwords will be distributed. The service is at **10:00AM**
- The calendar for the Unity Prayer Watch has come out. The day that Edgeboro is responsible for is Monday, **December 5th**. There will be sign up sheets for covering the times . Watch for them!
- What better way to close out the old year and seek to prayerfully enter the new year than to receive Holy Communion. On Saturday, **December 31st** from 4:30—6:00PM the sanctuary will be open for quiet reflection and dialogue with God. Upon entering the Sanctuary, participants will be offered a guide for this reflection time. This will be a time to review the past year and dedicate yourself anew to Christ for the new year. Then when ready, participants may come forward to receive Holy Communion from Pastor Dan. You are welcome to stay as long as you like.
- Dear Edgeboro Moravian Church,

Providing food—during the holiday season and all year round—is one of the most important services your generosity enables the Allentown Rescue Mission to offer to the homeless and hurting men who come through our doors. Your gift of \$396.80, given on 10/4/2016, is helping us bring comfort and relief to those who are hungry in so many ways. Some long for family and homes, others seek acceptance and friendship. All need affirmation that their lines matter. Every one of them needs hope.

Your giving enables our ministry to nourish those in our care with wholesome food, compassionate care, practical education and training—and most importantly, God’s unconditional love.

With these blessings, men are empowered to build stable and meaningful lives.

Thank you for your gift to bring food—and life changing hope—to those who need it so desperately. We are so grateful for your selfless generosity.

Jim Byrnes CEO,  
Allentown Rescue Mission

- Address change

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