



Leacock Communicator

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February 2012

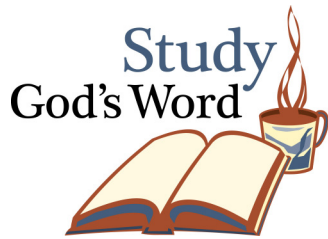
Notes from the Manse

At our recent Session retreat, we spent the better part of the day planning for the year ahead. But before we began wrestling with all the nuts and bolts of being a church, we began with a period of prayer and reflection. During one part of our devotion, all of us wrote on a sheet of paper something that brought us fear, something that brought us anger. What we wrote we kept to ourselves. Now, the Holy Spirit has many images; in *Acts* alone the Spirit comes as both wind and flame. Well, when we had written our fears and angers, we symbolically gave them to the Spirit by touching the slips of paper to a candle flame and then letting them burn to ash in a bowl. It is our hope—our prayer—that all that makes us afraid or angry can be transformed by the Spirit into something very different, something that builds and heals. To remind us of this, to remind us of the power of God working among us, each of us touched the cooled ashes and then marked another person's forehead. And then we each wrote on another slip of paper a gift we offer the church and a blessing the church offers us; on that slip of paper we wrote our names. And then we took turns linking our slips of papers with our neighbors, thanking them for their gifts, welcoming the opportunity to work and serve with them. In this way, we expressed our hope and desire that we all will be united and strengthened for the work ahead.

There is much to do; 2012 promises to be an exciting year in the life of Leacock. The Session agreed to continue to make our youth and young families a central priority. Much was begun in this regard last year—we have a vibrant Communicants Class; the number of children and youth participating in Sunday School and God's Place for Boys and Girls is increasing; programs for families are being offered. All this is good, but we want to do more, through such things as providing babysitting for parents who would like to attend an event, but could not otherwise do so. The Session was also intent on keeping on top of the organ project. The repair itself will be done soon, but we will still need to raise money to finish paying for the work. In our denomination, there are changes taking place, and the Session will be exploring such things as the new Form of Government in the Book of Order. Most broadly, we resolved to examine what are and should be the priorities of the church, where we need most to invest our money and energies. And we need everybody's help in this area. Too often, there are too few people doing too much. If more folks get involved, even in a small way, there is so much we can accomplish.

Still, we need always remember that in the end it is not up to us, it is up to God, that the work we should be about is not ours, but rather the Lord's. Paul taught in *1 Corinthians 12* that there are many gifts, many services, many different kinds of work, but they all flow from the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God. How can we know if the work we do is what God wills? Well, we need ask if it is for the common good, as Paul says it must be. If our work is born of the Spirit, then it will bear the fruit of the Spirit, the love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control of which Paul spoke in *Galatians 5*. At the end of the retreat, I cast the ashes of our angers and fears to the wind. If we but let ourselves be led by the Spirit, if we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit, it will truly be a blessed year.

Rev. Robert W. Birch



**LECTIONARY
FOR FEBRUARY**

- Feb 5 (5th Sunday after Epiphany)
Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

- Feb 12 (6th Sunday after Epiphany)
2 Kings 5:1-14
Psalm 30
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Mark 1:40-45

- Feb 19 (Transfiguration of the Lord)
2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

- Feb 22 (Ash Wednesday)
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or
Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

- Feb 28 (1st Sunday in Lent)
Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee would like to remind you that SOUPER BOWL donations coincides with the real Super Bowl on Sunday, February 5.

News from our Mission Families has been posted on the bulletin board in the Sunday School hall. Please take a moment and see what they are doing in missions towards God's work.

The second community meal for 2012 will be served on February 23 featuring ham, green beans, and potatoes with applesauce, pepper cabbage and desserts. Weis Markets in Gap has once again offered to donate breads and desserts. This averages about \$200 a meal. We would also, again, like to thank the congregation for their continued support of the community meal. Without you, we couldn't do it.

The Mission Committee is looking forward to involving the youth of the church in some of the mission activities. The Mission Committee will be glad to aid the youth in any mission that might be close to their hearts. It is refreshing to have Leacock youth along with youth from Bible Fellowship help with our meal. They help with serving, cooking and cleaning. We challenge all the youth of our church to come out and do the same when they can. We know

that youth involved in school activities can't always come, but they are welcome when they can.

Mission goals for the coming year will be set at the next meeting on Thursday, February 2. We will be looking for local programs that could impact our community and give recognition to our church for the purpose of God's work in this community preferably with our youth assisting the Mission Committee toward this goal.



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday March 4 after the 9:30am service (only one service that day).

A luncheon will be served after the meeting in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a covered dish to share.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

- Mark Twain, Humorist and writer

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Community Outreach Committee will kick off 2012 with its first meeting of the year on Thursday, February 2. We'll be discussing activities and opportunities that will mark Leacock as a strong presence in the community.

We'll continue to reach out to those both within and outside our church doors, volunteering at the Factory, providing food for community members through the food bank, putting up the caring tree at Christmas, and encouraging healthy bodies by holding the movers and shakers exercise class two nights a week. Also planned are learning, fun, and enlightenment through such things as lectures, musical programs, and board game nights.

We will challenge ourselves to come up with new activities in 2012, so stay tuned for that. Ideas are already brewing, and we'd love to hear yours.

The committee meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30pm throughout the year, and we can always use more hands, so please join us.

Emily Birch
Community Outreach
Moderator

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian Education is underway for 2012. The Communicants Class and youth had a great field trip when they attended a Hindu temple on January 29.

John and Kris Shirk, senior youth group leaders, happily report the group is thriving. They have been reading and discussing Ecclesiastes.

The adult electives have also successfully started their next study under the direction of Skip Brackbill and Tom Burkins. The committee thanks them for their leadership.



Check Your
Calendar

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Sunday, February 19
7:30pm

Book Discussion Group

Every Monday & Wednesday
(unless otherwise noted)
6:00pm

Movers and Shakers
(exercise class with Walk Away
the Pounds video, Come do as
little or as many 1-3 miles of
walking as you'd like)

Tuesday, February 28 &
Tuesday, March 27
6:30pm
Board Game Night

SENIOR YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

"Can't wait." That was a text (yes, if you are going to communicate with the Leacock youth, you need to text - or, - ahem, Rev. Birch, be married to someone who does) I received from one of our youth recently. It wasn't in reference to Sunday School, but rather in reference to our upcoming field trip to a Hindu temple.

Nonetheless, it reminded me to think about how I feel about Sunday School this year. I can't wait to join the youth in the lounge upstairs to hear what they have to say about the Lectionary readings each Sunday.

That's what we've been doing in Sunday School: reading the Bible and responding to it, and I'm having great fun and learning quite a bit from the questions raised and observations we've all made.

You may hear us laughing, quite a bit, but we're also quite serious in exploring scripture and how it reflects our lives today. If this sounds like fun to you, I can always use adult volunteers to help me each Sunday, so please let me know if you'd be interested in sharing this time with us.

Emily Birch
Senior Youth Sunday
School Teacher

LEACOCK BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Okay, everyone, it's time to get the Leacock book discussion group going again. Anyone read anything good lately that they'd like to discuss with a group? Come to a *let's-get-reading-again meeting* on Sunday, February 19 at 7:30pm.

We'll brain storm and make up a whole new list of books to keep us going in 2012.

Emily Birch
Book Discussion Group
Coordinator



Please Pray for:

PRAYER FAMILIES

- Feb 5 Dean, Jr. & Robbin Englehart
Stephan
- Feb 12 Linda Erikson
Kelly, David
- Feb 19 Ronald & Sue Esch
- Feb 26 Christine Eshleman

TRUSTEE NOTES

Please help me thank the past Trustee members, Mike Ruhl, Dick Miller and Tom Burkins for their services. We welcome back the returning members and also look for some fresh ideas from our new members as well. Please help us control cost by turning out lights and setting thermostat temps down in rooms not in use and after your meetings are over.

Please bring any issues that you may have to the Trustee members so they can be addressed. It is everyone's home here so please help us keep it operating smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you everyone for your efforts.

Mike McLaughlin
Trustee President

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO AT HOME MEMBERS

- Feb 6 Mildred Carpenter
1520 Harrisburg Pike
104 Anderson Run
Lancaster, PA 17601
- Feb 6 Ethel Danner
Apartment 113
433 S. Kinzer Avenue
New Holland, PA 17557
- Feb 28 Miriam Latshaw
1520 Harrisburg Pike
421B Eshelman Run
Lancaster, PA 17601

TRUSTEE SPECIAL OFFERING

February's Special Offering will be applied to new flooring for the Narthex. Quotes have been secured to complete this necessary work and plans are to move forward when the funds are raised. This is a huge undertaking and your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you from all the Trustee members.



PLEASE CHECK THE MARCH NEWSLETTER FOR THE EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

STEWARDSHIP REPORT - WITH FINANCIAL UPDATE THROUGH DECEMBER 2011

December Weekly Offering

December Expenses

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
December 4	\$5,774			
December 11	\$4,549			
December 18	\$4,412			
December 24	\$1,215			
December 25	<u>\$9,113</u>			
Monthly Total	\$25,063	\$19,685	\$28,133	\$23,631
Final for Year	\$210,749	\$215,094	\$221,390	\$218,699

Budget Tracking Through December

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Total Yearly Budget	\$250,269	\$250,125
Final Expenses	\$221,390	\$218,699
% of Budget Spent	88.46%	87.44%

There are many ways to look at this final financial report of the year. Our offering total was down a bit from 2010, while expenses were up, resulting in what appears to be a shortfall of over \$10,000. However, overall giving was up by a good bit this year, as people contributed to the Organ Fund and other projects. And expenses were up both because fuel oil prices are high and we have had to begin to pay for the organ repair; even then, we did not spend all the money that had been budgeted. The offering in December was up considerably from the year before, and overall, when all giving is taken into account we were solidly in the black. All of this is a tribute to the continuing support Leacock's members show their church, and the Stewardship Committee thanks you.



PER CAPITA

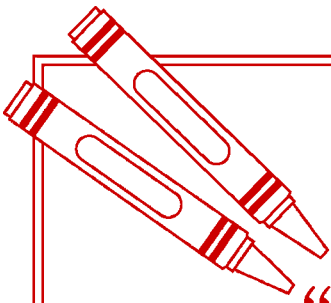
The per capita this year is \$28.64 per member. Please use the envelope found in the beginning of your envelope box. This supports the work of the General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery offices.

Lancaster General Hospital has scheduled community blood drives throughout the year at the following locations. Won't you consider giving blood - every pint is very important!

BLOOD DRIVE SCHEDULE 2010

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
July		
Wednesday, Feb 1	Kinzer Fire Company	2:00pm to 7:00pm
Thursday, Feb 2	Gordonville Fire Company	2:00pm to 7:00pm
Tuesday, Feb 21	Bareville Fire Company	2:00pm to 7:00pm
Tuesday, Feb 28	Yoder Market	1:00pm to 7:00pm

The Lancaster General Suburban Outpatient Pavilion (Health Campus) Blood Drive is located in Building 2104, Suite 202. The hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00am to 7:30pm. For more information call 544-0170.



Just for KIDS

Old Testament Prophets "Who Am I?"

Some Old Testament books are named after prophets. Discover the names of the prophets below. Use the clues to write the names on the lines. Arrange the circled letters on the bottom blanks to describe what a prophet is.

1. I was called to preach to the people of Ninevah, but I ran from God instead. *My book is number 32 in the Bible.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

2. I spoke God's message when the temple was being built. *My book is number 37.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

3. Israel's unfaithfulness to God is compared to my unfaithful wife. *My book is number 28.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

4. My book predicts punishment for wickedness and promises comfort. *It is book 23.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

5. I had dreams and visions. *My book is 27.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

6. I was often in danger because of my predictions. I angered officials. *My book is 24.*

I am _____ ○ _____ ○ _____ .

7. I was a shepherd from Judah who called people to turn to God and leave their selfish lives. *My book is 30.*

I am _____ ○ _____ .

8. *My book is 26* and contains descriptions of strange visions.

I am _____ ○ _____ ○ _____ .

Prophets are _____ .



MATTHEW 25 THRIFT SHOP

Right before Christmas Leacock Church's Emergency Fund received a check for \$1,000 from the Matthew 25 Thrift Shop in Lititz.

The Matthew 25 Board of Directors has asked that we share a bit about their mission with our congregation. Having been operating since August 2000, the shop was established to "engender funds that would help meet emergency needs, primarily those of Lancaster County residents." Staffed by volunteers, the shop is stocked by donations of gently used and new clothing for men, women, and children, household goods, and books.

Each month the Board of Directors disperses funds from the shop's proceeds to area agencies, churches, and service and charitable organizations. To date they have donated more than \$1,600,000 to meet special needs.

On behalf of the congregation, the Emergency Fund has sent a thank you note to this organization. Anyone wishing to donate goods to them or to shop in their store, located at 48 East Main Street in Lititz, is encouraged to do so.

ANSWER
Answers: Jonah, Haggai, Hosea, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Amos, Ezekiel, Messengers.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

“The Congregational Life committee supports and nurtures our church family by planning and implementing events that bring people together. By serving the Lord in this way we seek to foster a stronger Christian community, love our neighbors and live as enthusiastic witnesses of Christ.” - And you thought it was just about food!

Please consider joining the Congregational Life committee as we try to meet the needs of this congregation. We really need your help. If you are unable to commit to committee membership, there are many other ways to help. 8:00worshippers can volunteer to prepare coffee for one month. (Everything is provided, we will train you and it takes about 15 minutes - a one hour a year commitment.)

10:30 people could sign up to clean up the coffee cart after that service. Food, including sugar free treats, is always needed. Other volunteer opportunities include helping to set tables, cook, serve, donate food or clean up the kitchen for a lunch or reception. Or join us when we go Christmas caroling or stop for a few extra minutes after church to talk to someone new.

Thank you to all the wonderful people who helped in the past and

thank you to those who are willing to help this year. Sign up sheets are on the food table in the Narthex or contact Esta Fisher (397-1151) for more information.

CROSSROADS CLASS

The Crossroads Class will meet at the home of Arlene Brackbill on Saturday, February 11, 2:00pm. Miriam Eberly will presents highlights from her trip to the United Arab Republic.

CIRCLE MEETING

Circle will meet on Thursday, February 9, 9:30am at the home of Betty Sowers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ELECTIVES

One of the options for adult Sunday School Christian Education is a discussion group, with the discussions centered on current topics of interest. The first topic was centered on the theme of Peace, Justice and Care of God’s Creation. The group is gathering on Sunday mornings at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall.

A second option is a Bible Study and Discussion Group entitled, *Growing Through Life’s Challenges*. This is a ten week course, but each week is an independent study, so please join in at any time. The topics for the next two weeks are listed in the bulletin each week. We gather Sunday morning in the church library at 9:20.



CHURCH OFFICERS

Committed to following Jesus Christ, the Leacock Presbyterian Church is a caring family of God welcoming all persons in their spiritual journey.

SESSION

Moderator: Rev. Robert W. Birch

Clerk: Dianne M. Yuninger

Congregational Life Esta Fisher (chair), Sharon Williams

Christian Education John Shirk (chair), Dianne Yuninger

Worship Darwin Eshleman (chair),
Christian Brackbill

Community Outreach Emily Birch (chair), Janet Huffman

Mission Nick Lopez (chair), Deborah Sindall

Stewardship Steve Boas (chair),
Matthew McClarigan

DEACONS

Class of 2012

Ellen Barnes

Johanna Gingher

Evie Lopez

Margy Hershey

Class of 2013

Tracy Dippner

Lois Snader

Shelly Summers

Jane Witmer

Class of 2014

Dorothy Buckwalter

Sue Esch

Ralph Shenk

Betty Sowers

TRUSTEES

Class of 2012

Chuck Ankney

Craig Keenan

Scott Shenk

Class of 2013

Dave Berkhimer

Bob Hershey

Doug High

Class of 2014

Karen Boyer

Mike Hartmann

Michael McLaughlin

CLIP AND SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE





SESSION SNIPPETS

The Session journeyed to Black Rock Retreat Center, south of Quarryville, January 28 for an all day retreat to begin their year as your Ruling Elders. Rev. Birch led us in a meaningful time of devotions and spiritual renewal based on Philippians 4:4-7. Each elder wrote something he or she fears and something that makes him or her angry on a white slip of paper. Bob talked about the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, symbolized by wind and fire, and then had each of us burn our fears and angers in the flames of a candle. Next elders used a blue strip of paper to write a gift each believes he or she brings to the Session and a blessing we receive from being part of Leacock. After sharing this information, we glued the strips into a chain while saying we rejoice in each other and look forward to being linked together in our work for Christ this year. Our final devotional act was to dip our fingers into the ashes of our fears and angers and anoint the foreheads of our colleagues in ministry.

Business was conducted during the entire day (9:30am - 4:40pm), interspersed with Scripture passages related to the items being discussed. The following actions were taken:

- Hymn Sing dates for 2012: May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2.
- The next stated Session meeting was scheduled for February 23.
- Communion dates for 2012: January 15, March 4, April 5, May 27, September 2, October 7, and November 25.
- The Annual Meeting was scheduled for March 4 following one service of worship at 9:30am. A Fellowship Meal will follow the meeting.
- Old Leacock was reserved June 2 for Dustin Brackbill's wedding.
- Paradise sanctuary was reserved June 16 for Jesse Ide's wedding.
- A 2% interest rate was set on five year promissory notes to congregation members wishing to loan money to the church to finish the organ project.
- We will again support the Trimbles with \$10,000 from our General Assembly allotment.
- The Session will spend the first

half of this year attending to the following priorities: building on the Christian Education momentum with youth and young families, finishing the organ project, allowing committees time to get their "feet on the ground," completing the Communicant's Class, and incorporating new members into the life of the church.

- A Mission Study Committee will be established by the end of July.
- A new Session meeting format will be instituted in which the first hour will be devoted to business and the second hour to other Session matters needing study, including but not limited to the new form of government and how to do a mission study.
- Rev. Birch challenged the 2012 Session to find enjoyment in our toil and to "knit together the body of Christ to grow in love."

Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint on it you can.

- Danny Kaye, Entertainer

Either you decide to stay in the shallow end of the pool or you go out in the ocean.

- Christopher Reeve, Actor



Dear Leacock Family,

Thank you for all of the prayers, phone calls and cards during my latest illness. Appreciate the hospital visit by Rev. Birch. Thanks to Jane Witmer and June Stannard for the beautiful white poinsettia plant they brought to my home in early-December.

Richard Leaman Smith

Dear Church Family,

Malcolm and I want to thank the carolers who came to us on December 11. They helped put us in the Christmas spirit, and the cookies helped too! We also appreciate the lovely poinsettia plant that Jane Witmer, our friend and deacon, brought to Malcolm.

We received many Christmas cards and Malcolm enjoyed opening them all. If he didn't recognize a name, I got out the church directory and that helped.

We wish all a happy and blessed New Year.

Malcolm and June Stannard

Dear Church Friends,

Thank you. The cookies were the BEST. Sorry I was walking and missed you. (I waited, but did not know what time you were coming - so sorry.)

Jean Beane

Dear Leacock friends and family,

We are very grateful for the kind and generous expressions of love that you have shown to us during this difficult time. Your cards, flowers, phone calls, visits, and prayer shawls have been very much appreciated. Thank you for your many thoughts and prayers.

In Christ's love,

Lee Brown and family

Dear Church Family,

Thank you sincerely for your kind expressions of sympathy. They were deeply appreciated.

Mary M. Weaver



<p>leacockpres.org</p> <p>Our web address is www.leacockpres.org</p> <p>You Can Find</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ <i>Leacock Communicator</i> ☺ Cancellations ☺ Usher and Nursery Schedule ☺ The Church Calendar ☺ Pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ The Church Staff ☺ Directions ☺ Times of the Services ☺ Church Officers ☺ Links to More Information

TENDING THE LAWN

“The grass is not, in fact, always greener on the other side of the fence,” writes Robert Fulghum in *It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It* (Villard Books). “Fences have nothing to do with it. The grass is greenest where it is watered. When crossing over fences, carry water with you and tend the grass wherever you may be.”

**RESPONSIBILITIES AT LEACOCK CHURCH
FEBRUARY**

NURSERY NEEDS TO BE CHANGED

If you are unable to serve as a volunteer, PLEASE TRADE WITH SOMEONE SCHEDULED ON ANOTHER SUNDAY. Call the office secretary, 687-6619, so she can make the bulletin change. THANK YOU!

Feb 5	8:00	Deb Sindall
	10:30	Valarie and Mike Ruhl
Feb 12	8:00	Loretta McClarigan
	10:30	Kris and Allison Shirk
Feb 19	8:00	Ellen Barnes
	10:30	John and Kate Shirk
Feb 26	8:00	Dick Miller
	10:30	Kelly and Mike Hartmann
March 4	9:30	Sharon Williams and Emily Birch
		ONE SERVICE
March 11	8:00	Cathy and Taryn Shenk
	10:30	Lois Snader and Mike McLaughlin
March 18	8:00	Nick and Evie Lopez
	10:30	Craig Keenan and Darwin Eshleman
March 25	8:00	Sue Funk
	10:30	Deb Beane and Johanna Gingher



DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES

(Transportation for School House Friends & Flower Deliveries)

February	Ralph Shenk
March	Betty Sowers



USHERS

Donald Andrews, Head Usher 8:00 Service, (687-7878)	Ed Margerum, Head Usher 10:30 Service, (442-4027)
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PLEASE NOTE -- If you are unable to serve the month or part of the month you are scheduled for, please try to trade with someone else then contact the head usher. They will contact the church office. THANK YOU!

FEBRUARY

Karen Boyer	Margy Hershey
Deb Burkholder	Robert Hershey
Art Myers	George Shue
David Homsher	Karen Shue

MARCH

Peter Conway	Forrest Boas
Ellen Barnes	David Erikson
Tom Burkins	Valarie Ruhl
Vicki Burkins	Katherine Boas



A JOURNEY OF FAITH— LEACOCK'S COMMUNICANTS CLASS

A while back, in one of my *Notes from the Manse* pieces, I mentioned that I would be beginning a communicants class for our youth. The idea was that we would together explore the world's major religions in order to better understand the nature of faith and its place in our own, individual lives.

Well, our journey has begun, and what a journey it promises to be! There are ten regulars in the class, supplemented at times by various friends they have brought along. We have talked about what people really want in life and how that affects what they seek, what they really value. We have debated what is really important and how to find it. And we have talked about God. Along the way, we have sat on the narthex floor in a circle, with legs rather painfully folded, trying to discover a bit about how to sit in silence, how to still our thoughts—much to the surprise of a member of the congregation who stopped by that evening to drop something off.

We have visited a Hindu temple, where we heard prayers chanted and saw richly colorful rituals unfold, and learned a few Sanskrit prayers. Later, we ate a pungent Indian meal

with members of the congregation. Apparently, at least some of our youth won't be making any mad rush to become Hindus—two told their parents they couldn't imagine a religion in which most people didn't eat meat.

Next up on our itinerary is Buddhism, which I told the youth is, in a way, a kind of protestant Hinduism. I will keep you posted as we move along. All I can say so far is we have been blessed, with a great group of young people, curious and ready to dig into all kinds of matters of faith.



FUNDING THE ORGAN PROJECT—AN UPDATE

When the Organ Fundraising Committee first met, several members hoped that \$30,000 could be raised to pay for the organ repair through donations and various fundraisers. Well, this congregation and friends have more than met that early hope—between pledges and money already received, we have already reached the \$46,000 level.

The Pic-a-Pipe program was a resounding success, as was the yard sale. And folks from the community also helped with events such as the

volleyball tournament and the night at Rita's (even though it was a bit cold!). So, the Committee would like to thank all who have helped us get this far.

However, there is still more to do. The total cost of the project will be roughly \$80,000, so we have to raise an additional \$34,000. The Session has decided to seek loans from the congregation to secure this amount. Any member of Leacock can lend money to finish this project. Loans must be for a minimum of \$1,000 and will be for five years. The interest will be 2% to be paid semiannually, in June and December. If you are interested in offering a loan, please notify the church office; the deadline for offering loans will be February 23, as we will have to have the monies in hand for payment at the end of the repair. Promissory notes will be issued to all who lend the church funds for this project.

The interest rate of 2% is higher than any currently being offered by local banks and credit unions, so we are confident enough loans will be offered. This will not be the end of our work, however, for money still will need to be raised to pay off the loans, both principle and interest. Therefore, look forward to more fundraisers down the road. And, of course, more donations will be greatly appreciated. Overall, we are well over half of the way there, a tribute to how Leacock's members pitch in for their church.



MATTERS OF FAITH—QUESTIONS FOR A PASTOR

A bit before Christmas, someone dropped a sheet in my folder outside the office with a list of questions related to faith and asked if I might not answer one or two in the newsletter. Well, it seems like a good idea, so each month I will work my way down that person's list in this space. If others have questions, don't hesitate to let me know—if I can, I will answer them. The first asks, "Are tattoos and piercings sinful? What does the Bible say about this?"

Forty years ago, this question probably wouldn't have occurred to many folks; nowadays, with so many getting piercings and tattoos, it has become a rather hot topic for people of faith. *Leviticus 19:28* says, "You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord." And Paul says in *1 Corinthians 3:16* and elsewhere, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you." If our bodies are created and set apart by and for God, it is argued, then we should not do anything that would mark or deface or change them. For some folks, passages such as these clearly say that it is against God's will to have tattoos or piercings.

However, there are others who contend that the matter is not so clear, for there are many customs and commands of God in the Hebrew Bible that people no longer observe. For instance, they point out that in *Numbers 15:32-36* the Lord demands a man be put to death because he gathered sticks on the Sabbath. And *Deuteronomy 21:18-21* states that the men of a town should stone to death disobedient, stubborn sons. Now, surely, these folks argue, we should honor the Sabbath, but in our time we do far more on it than merely gather sticks; surely, sons (and, presumably, daughters) should obey their parents, but if they don't, few would suggest that they be killed. And they point out that the issue in the *Leviticus* passage seems to involve acts done to remember or honor the dead; it then can at least be argued that tattoos and piercings for other reasons are OK. Finally, they note that Paul stresses that he and all who follow Christ are freed from the law, in passages such as *Romans 10:4* which says, "For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes."

The other side counters by pointing out that Jesus says in *Matthew 5:17* that he has not come to abolish the law, but rather to fulfill it. Back and forth the argument can go. For me, it is important always to remember that Jesus also said in *Matthew* and elsewhere that all the law hangs on two commandments, to love God with all our being and to love our neighbors as ourselves. If a piercing is done out of anger or even hate against others or oneself, then it opposes the will of God. If a tattoo expresses anything that denies or opposes love, then it too is counter to God's will. But then this is true of all we do. Sin separates us from God. If getting a piercing or a tattoo or anything else we do turns us from the Lord, yes, it is a sin. But if it does not prevent us from loving as we are commanded to do, then it is not.

One last thing—I have a question: who put that note in my folder? I would love to know, if for no other reason to thank you for showing how much you are thinking and caring about matters of faith.

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