

Leacock Communicator Leacock Presbyterian Church

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December - January 2013

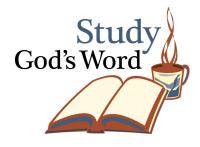
Notes from the Manse

Though it might seem a strange thing to do at the end of November, let me be the first to wish you a Happy New Year. Oh, I know, there's still many weeks to go before January 1st, and for many, those weeks will be so filled with shopping and planning and cooking that it will feel like they are crawling by. Still, such a wish actually makes more sense than you might at first imagine. You see, our faith is not about something done and gone. It was and is and always will be about beginnings. Think about what the word "gospel" literally means—good news. The word about the Savior who has come is about something wonderfully new, something that moves beyond the old word of endings, the dying of dreams and hope. And that word is ever new. In part, this is because Advent is not only about a coming, a new thing, that happened 2,000 years ago; it also reminds us that Christ will come again to complete the renewal of the world. However, that word is also ever new because it speaks of possibility in our lives, possibility that we often do not recognize. Remember to whom the angel Gabriel brought his good news. It is no coincidence it was to two women who in the eyes of their world would have seemed the least likely candidates to bring about something great. One was Elizabeth, a woman without a child and too old to have one, which left her sadly disgraced. The other was Mary, so young, perhaps only 14, told that she is pregnant before she is married, which promised her too great disgrace. A woman who can't have a child; another woman who is going to have a child before she is ready—these are the ones the Lord chooses. These are the ones, according to Gabriel, upon whom the Lord looks with favor.

Well, sometimes wonderful things still do come from unlikely sources. Back when I taught, I was also the head coach of the junior varsity football team. One year, the athletic director made a mistake and scheduled a game with a much larger school's JV, which meant we would be going up against a team with players on our own varsity's level. The other team arrived and my little guys looked up at these big, strapping players and about died. But I told them that they might just surprise that team; after all, they certainly weren't expecting much, after taking a glance at us. I told the guys just to believe in themselves and have fun. Well, they did. To the horror of the other team and the rage of their coaches, my guys ran around with a fury, sneaking behind befuddled defenders for passes, swarming to make tackles. In the end, we did lose. But when the two teams left the field, ours was wildly cheering, while they looked like they'd lost. And you know what? We didn't lose another game the rest of the season.

You may not believe you are all that special. In fact, there may have been times in your life when you thought you were a pretty sorry friend or parent or child. But this is the wonder of our faith—like Elizabeth, like Mary, the Lord looks upon you with favor, and the Lord can make something marvelous come from you. To you, it might not look so great. But to those whom you touch, it may make all the difference in the world. All you need do when the Lord comes to bless you is say what Mary said—"Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then, surely, good news will come. Happy New Year.

Rev. Robert W. Birch



LECTIONARY FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

- Dec 2 (1st Sunday of Advent) Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 25:1-10 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Luke 21:25-36
- Dec 9 (2nd Sunday of Advent) Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philemon 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
- Dec 16 (3rd Sunday of Advent) Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 Philemon 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18
- Dec 23 (4th Sunday of Advent) Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:46-55 or Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)
- Dec 24 (Christmas Eve) Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96:1-13 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
- Dec 25 (Christmas) Christmas Dawn Isaiah 62:6-12

- Psalm 97:1-12 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2: (1-7) 8-20 *Christmas Day* Isaiah:52:7-10 Psalm:98:1-9 Hebrews:1-4 (5-12) John 1:1-14
- Dec 30 (1st Sunday After Christmas) 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52
- Jan 6 (Epiphany of the Lord) Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12
- Jan 13 (Baptism of the Lord) Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29 Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
- Jan 20 (2nd Sunday After Epiphany) Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 36:5-10 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11
- Jan 27 (3rd Sunday After Epiphany) Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21



CAROLING

After second service on December 9, a light lunch will be served prior to going caroling. If you have participated in the past, you know how rewarding the experience can be.

Our efforts to bring Christmas cheer, no matter how inexpert the singing, is always gratefully received and the carolers are also enriched by the experience.

Please consider joining us this year. The number of people we can carol to depends entirely on how many of you give up a Sunday afternoon for the at-home members and hurting of the congregation.

Besides, it's a lot of fun!





ADVENT CARING FAMILY NIGHT

You've been hearing about it for quite some time, but now it is right around the corner. Every one of you has been assigned to a new family, a Leacock family, a unit meant to care for and nurture each other, imitating the love of Christ.

Do you want to meet and greet your family members, some of whom you may know well, others who may be new to you?

Then come join us on Sunday December 16th at 5:00pm for what promises to be Leacock's Biggest Event of the winter - Advent Caring Family Night.

We will join for a potluck meal, games, an introduction to your new family members, a little information about what family members can do for each other, and a carol sing in the sanctuary to top off the night.

Lois Snader and Emily Birch Advent Caring Family Night Coordinators

FLOWERS

You may purchase flowers for the sanctuary on Sundays December 9, December 23, December 30, January 6, or January 20 in honor of or in memory of someone or a special occasion. Call the church office at 687-6619.

PRAYER FAMILIES

FRATER FAMILLES			
Dec 2	Lori Ann Leitch		
Dec 9	Nick & Pat Axe Leto, Michael, Leah, Blake, Logan		
Dec 16	Matthew & Michele Lichty, Ian, Lea, Sara		
Dec 23	Peter & Jessica Brackbill Loomis		
Dec 30	Nick & Evie Lopez		
Jan 6	Wesley H. III & Laura Lowery Elizabeth, Mary, Wesley IV		
Jan 13	Robert & Geri Lutz		
Jan 20	Michael & Melissa Mabry, Mason, Maleah		
Jan 27	Allen E. & Cassandra Margerum		

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO AT-HOME MEMBER

Jan 9 Bill Berkhimer 1614 Bentley Ridge Blvd Lancaster, PA 17602



LEACOCK BOOK AND A MOVIE CLUB

The book we are reading for the Leacock Book and a Movie Club is *Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver. We have not yet set the date to discuss the book, so you have plenty of time to read it (perhaps spending a few evenings with it in early January, after the rush of the holidays is gone).

Meanwhile, on January 20, at 5:00pm, we will enjoy a potluck meal and a viewing of the movie *Smoke Signals*, a movie based on a short story by Sherman Alexie, the author of the book we discussed in November.

> Emily Birch Book and a Movie Club Coordinator

SUPERIORITY

The truth is that there is nothing noble in being superior to somebody else. The only real nobility is in being superior to your former self.

- Whitney Young (1921-1971) Civil rights leader

STEWARDSHIP REPORT-FINANCIAL UPDATE OCTOBER 2012

	Offering, October		Expenses, October	
	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Monthly Total	\$14,722.00	\$14,882.00	\$22,018.00	\$19,800.00
Year-to-Date	\$158,690.00	\$170,262.00	\$169,897.00	\$179,017.00
Budget Tracking through October				
	<u>2012</u>	2011		
Total Annual Budget	\$247,355.00	\$250,125.00		
Year to Date Expenses	\$169,897.00	\$179,017.00		
% of Budget Spent	69%	72%		
Total Giving (offering plus special fund giving) through October				

Iotal Giving (offering plu	<u>s special fund giving) throu</u>	<u>igh October</u>
	2012	2011
Monthly Total	\$17,142.00	\$22,912.00
Year to Date	\$220,866.00	\$211,185.00

If you were able to attend Church on November 18, you heard a message delivered on stewardship during the announcements, read by Rev. Birch or delivered by myself. This message was given to insure all members of our congregation understand where we stand financially in regards to our budget, now that we are just over three fourth of the way through 2012. Here today, I will recap that message and explain our financial situation as it stands at the end of October. If you were at one of the November 18 services, please still continue to read this message too!

Stewardship is commonly defined as our commitment to and use of our time, talents and treasure to benefit humankind. This is an acknowledgement of Jesus Christ's redeeming love. We have so many talented persons who spend great amounts of time on our church, all for the good of others. I will speak to time and talents in the near future, but at this point in time I will concentrate on the financial aspects of stewardship. Many churches within our denomination and our Presbytery handle budgets by soliciting pledges from the congregation from which to base the budget on. The wonder of stewardship here at Leacock is that it is our own self discovery and decisions that lead us to our level of commitment to stewardship. Leacock doesn't even ask for an estimate of giving from members and we go on faith that we will meet our budget, which allows us to fulfill our ministry to others. In years past, it is not uncommon for there to be a deficit at this point of the year, but by the end of the year it has always ended up very close to break even. Our **expenses** were covered, not our planned budget.

This year, not including special funds, we have spent \$11,200 more than received in offering, which is slightly more than in years past. One very bright statistic though, is to look at TOTAL giving, which includes those "special funds" such as the organ fund, the Narthex flooring fund, the fund to clean the pews and all other special projects as defined by our Trustees. When looking at this total giving, we have been graced with \$220,866 so far this year, compared to \$211,185 at the same point in 2011. This is true generosity! But doesn't change the fact we are still behind at this point in the year.

It is very hard to come before you here in these difficult economic times, as many of us are hurting or afraid we may hurt financially in the future. Please remember that our church is here to guide us, teach us and spiritually support us, but it also needs our support, especially to do the work and provide the support for our Ministry to Others. Please prayerfully consider anything you can possibly do to help our church meet our goals so our commitments for our mission endeavors both locally and internationally won't be in danger of not being met this year or any year in the future.

I will close this message with a quote from one of my wife's favorite authors: "If you want love and abundance in your life, give it away." ~Mark Twain

Thank You! Steven Boas Stewardship Chairperson

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

This is the final month of my chairmanship of the Congregational Life Committee, and I want to thank the members of the committee and the congregation for all the help and donations provided this past year.

You have helped set up, clean up and provide food for countless functions and your help has been greatly appreciated.

Sharon Williams will take over next year and will need your continued support. Volunteer to serve on the committee, make coffee, provide food (bought cookies are fine-you do not have to be a baker) clean up after church or after a meal.

Your ideas and opinions concerning our programs and projects are also important. Tell us what you value and what should change and what new projects you would like to see implemented.

Thanks again for all you do for the good of the congregation.

Esta Fisher



MISSION COMMITTEE

The end of the year is approaching very fast. In the coming months, we will have the Christmas Joy Offering in December and the Blanket Offering the last two Sundays in January. Please check the pews for the special envelopes.

The Mission Committee will be serving a community meal once every month again in 2013. The dates are a little different for various reasons, even though we try to have them on the last Thursdays of the month. The dates are: January 31, February 28, March 21, April 25, May 30, June 27, July 25, August 29, September 26, October 24, November 14, and December 19.

There will be signup sheets in the Narthex on the Sunday two weeks before the meal. Help is needed with cooking, setup, serving, and cleanup

With your help in the past, our meals have been a blessing to an average of 65 people in need each month. The Mission Committee would like to express how much we appreciate those volunteers who have continued to help unselfishly with donations made for the meal, and help at the meal. You have reached out in God's mission to those in need.

Besides our meals this year, Leacock Church has reached out in

our local community by helping with the Hershey-Fisher benefit which yielded over \$50,000 in one day to help defray medical bills for those two families. Most recently, our church, with the local fire companies, Paradise, Leaman Place, Gap, and Christiana, has been a supporter of those in need because of hurricane Sandy. We thank those who donated the many needed items to those who fell victim of Sandy. Many don't realize that our church was responsible for the coordination thorough the Presbytery which gave us a contact church in Staten Island. Thanks, too, to our secretary, Michele, McLaughlin, who made many calls to locate the church where these goods would do the most good. Olivet Presbyterian Church, 97 Myrtle Avenue, Staten Island, NY was our contact for the two trips made to aid the victims of Sandy.

Here is a copy of their email to Michele:

Greetings in the name of Christ! It was such a joy to meet all the folk from the Lancaster area that worked so hard to get all those donations here to Staten Island. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of so many brothers and sisters in Christ! Many thanks and blessings. Pastor Melodee, Olivet Presbyterian Church

REMEMBER THE AT-HOME MEMBERS AT CHRISTMAS

Jean Beane Apt. 310, Woodcrest Villa 2001 Harrisburg Pike Lancaster, PA 17601

Bill E. Berkhimer 1614 Bentley Ridge Blvd. Lancaster, PA 17602

Lee Brown 8 Bethany Avenue Paradise, PA 17562

Mildred S. Carpenter 1520 Harrisburg Pike Lancaster, PA 17601 Charles and Ethel Danner 433 S. Kinzer Avenue Apartment Suite 113 Garden Spot Village New Holland, PA 17557

Miriam Keneagy Room 3 Village Manor Brethren Village 3001 Lititz Pike Lancaster, PA 17606

Miriam Latshaw 1520 Harrisburg Pike Lancaster, PA 17601 Esther Schenke Room 114 Fairmount Home 219 Cats Back Road Ephrata, PA 17522-8629

Malcolm Stannard 61 Slaymaker Hill Road Kinzers, PA 17535-9703

Betty Taylor Fall Crest 117 433 S. Kinzer Avenue New Holland, PA 17557

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday, December 2 - 5:30pm ADVENT CARING FAMILY NIGHT Potluck Meal

> Sunday, December 9 CAROLING After 2nd Service

Sunday, December 16 - 5:00pm CARING FAMILY ADVENT NIGHT

Sunday, January 20 - 5:00pm BOOK AND A MOVIE CLUB POTLUCK AND VIEWING OF SMOKE SIGNALS



great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of to swan boog uoy grind. I bring you good news of

David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

TRUSTEE NOTES

Finally the Narthex floor is complete and just in time for the holidays. Hope everyone approves as it was a major undertaking and investment. Thank you to each and everyone who donated time, money and efforts to make the entrance of the Church much more appealing.

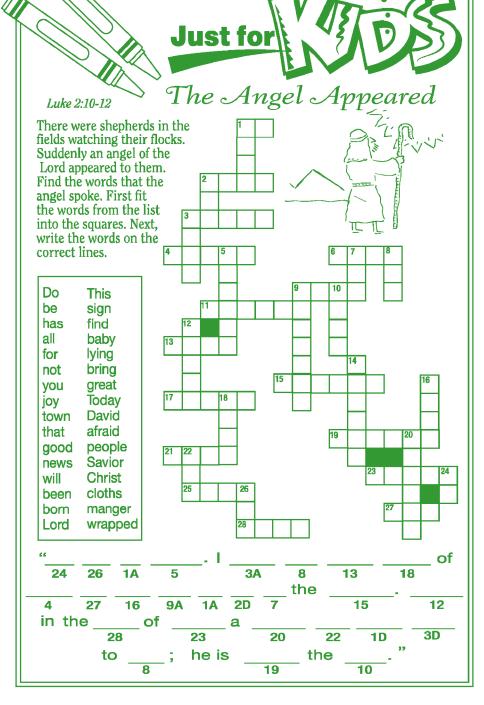
With the holidays also comes cold weather. Please be mindful of the lights and heat settings when you leave the buildings. We are concerned about the oil and energy consumption and we need everyone to pitch in. Please help us conserve as much as possible,

As always, please make sure that you bring any issues that need addressed to a Trustee member or place a note in the mailbox or with the secretary.

Thank you once again and have a great holiday season,

The Trustee Group





COMMUNITY OUTREACH (Next community outreach meeting: Thursday December 6 at 7:30pm. All are welcome to join us.) The Community Outreach Committee wanted everyone to be able to spend December 2 admiring all the goodies they bought at the bazaar on Dec. 1, so we made a big decision in November to change the Caring Family Advent Night from Sunday December 2 to Sunday December 16.

In November, we also welcomed Lee Barrett, who lectured on Christian Faith and the 2012 Presidential Election. It was a very interesting lecture, in which he raised a theory of red state religion and blue state religion and gave us much food for thought.

The Leacock Book and a Movie Club met to engage in a lively discussion of *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. We were inspired by the thoughtful questions David Homsher posed. We'll meet on January 20 at 5:00 for a potluck meal and a viewing of the movie *Smoke Signals*, which is based on one of Alexie's short stories.

As I mentioned in my last newsletter article, we hope you will be eager to take this opportunity to play Santa Claus to those in our community who would otherwise have empty stockings and will take a tag off one of the two Caring Trees. If you do decide to participate, please read the instructions carefully.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All!

Emily Birch Community Outreach Chair

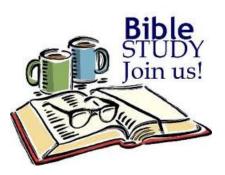
CHRISTMAS IN THE WOODS

The annual live nativity at Camp Donegal will take place on Sunday, December 16.

Participants are also invited inside to enjoy refreshments, fellowship, live music and festive decorations while being warmed by the blazing fire at the hearth of the dining hall fireplace.

This event takes place between 5:00 and 8:00pm with nativities at 5:15, 6:00, 6:45 and 7:30. Live music by area musicians and choirs will take place in the dining hall at 5:30, 6:20, 7:05 and 7:50.

While there is no charge for this event, there are opportunities to purchase seasonal crafts and baked goods. Donations are also welcomed to support the ministry of Camp Donegal.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Are you a woman interested in Bible study but not able to make the morning sessions? We've added an evening session just for you. This session uses the same *Horizons* study that the other two sessions use, and meets the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m.

Monday morning and Tuesday evening Bible studies are on Lesson 3, *A Spiritual House and Household Matters*, 1Peter 2:1-10; 3 John 1-8.

Meeting respectively Dec 3, 7:30am and Dec 18, 7:30pm in fellowship hall. Please come join us.

> Emily Birch & Marie Brackbill Bible Study Leaders

THANK YOU NOTE

Thank you for the flowers and kindness that you showed to me. May Glad bless you and keep you.

Pluma Hostetter (your mashed potato lady!)

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 Class of 2013 Class of 2014 Karen Homsher **Emily Birch** Nick Lopez Steve Boas Matt McClarigan Skip Brackbill Deb Sindall **Ruth Doutrich Conway** Sharon Williams Jenny Keenan Dianne Yuninger Art Myers

Class of 2013 Tracy Dippner Lois Snader Shelly Summers Jane Witmer

Class of 2013 Dave Berkhimer Bob Hershey Doug High

DEACONS

Class of 2014 Dorothy Buckwalter Charlene Boas Margy Hershey **Ralph Shank Betty Sowers**

Class of 2015 Janet Cosby Geri Lutz Lori Smith

TRUSTEES

Class of 2014 Karen Boyer Mike Hartmann Michael McLaughlin Karen Shue

Class of 2015 Sean Carney George Shue

CLIP AND SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

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 DECEMBER 2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Wednesday, Dec 5	White Horse Fire Hall	2:00pm to 7:00pm
Thursday, Dec 13	Intercourse Fire Company	2:00pm to 7:30pm

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.

Matters of Faith—Questions for a Pastor

This month brings us to the (apparent) end of the questions given me by an anonymous correspondent. I hope that he or she, as well as others, have enjoyed this column. It certainly has given me a challenge or two, and if nothing else, it may have inspired some to reflect a bit more on their faith. Well, without further ado, our final question: "Often when I hear someone speaking of someone they lost, they will say *They're angels now*. It's my understanding that God created a set number of angels and that when we die, we become beings *above* angels. Which is correct?"

The understanding of angels is something that has evolved since the earliest days Scripture was written and right up to the present day. As a result, the answer to the question may not be particularly satisfying. Which idea above is correct? Both. The Hebrew word translated as angel is *malakh* and the Greek word is *angelos*, both of which, literally, refer to messengers. In fact, fully half of the occurrences of *malakh* in the Hebrew Bible refers to human messengers of some sort. Over time, however, the term did come most commonly to refer to spiritual beings who were part of a heavenly court and exercised God's will. One of their most common functions was either to report to God about what humans were doing or to try to tell humans what God willed.

But what are they? Well, Scripture makes it clear that they are creatures, perhaps above humans in their wisdom and power, but still created by God. They are therefore not to be worshipped. There are repeated references to the "heavenly host." "Host" was a common military term referring to an army and indicated a large number. Thus, as far as the number of angels is concerned, most often it was left simply that there were a lot of them. Often, angels are sent to help humans, particularly when on a journey or enduring a trial of some kind—the angels that minister to Jesus after his days of temptation in the wilderness are one example. However, not all angels were believed to be good—after all, it was Satan who tempted Jesus, and in time he was considered to be the leader of the fallen angels. Still, most angels were thought to be good. The notion of guardian angels seems to have come from Jesus' reference to angels watching over children, as mentioned in *Matthew 18:10. Luke* tells us that angels rejoice when a sinner repents—that kind of reminds me of bells ringing and angels getting their wings, as in *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Hebrews 12:22 seems to suggest that the saints will one day join the company of angels, which has given rise to the idea that in time the righteous will live with the angels. Another school of thought suggests that the righteous will actually be transformed into angels. Wesley had a variation on this idea, with all creatures in the afterlife rising in station, animals to humans and humans to angels. However, Paul, in *1 Corinthians 6:3* says that one day humans will judge angels, implying that we will be above them.

So, I am afraid there's no real consensus, at least that I could find, about angels. Perhaps, it's good to recall that angels were originally messengers, both human and heavenly. Perhaps, even in this life, as flawed as we may be, we can be messengers of and for God, bringing love and forgiveness, healing and grace, to our sisters and brothers. Perhaps, in our own way, we can be angels.

Rev. Robert W. Birch

RESPONSIBILITES AT LEACOCK CHURCH DECEMBER AND JANUARY <u>NURSERY</u>

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

Dec 2	8:00 10:30	Karen Boyer Charlene Boas & Craig Keenan
Dec 9	8:00 10:30	Janet Huffman Donald Fieldsa & Christy Taub
Dec 16	8:00 10:30	Taryn Shenk Michele & Lea Lichty
Dec 23	9:30	Tom & Vicki Burkins
Dec 30	8:00 10:30	Tracy Dippner Sean & Maureen Carney
Jan 6	8:00 10:30	Cathy Shenk Lauren & Ruth Anne Appel
Jan 13	8:00 10:30	Skip Brackbill Mike & Kelly Hartmann
Jan 20	8:00 10:30	Loretta McClarigan Bob & Margy Hershey
Jan 27	8:00 10:30	Sue Funk Alba & Valerie Ruhl

<u>USHERS</u>

Donald Andrews, Head Usher
8:00 Service, (687-7878)Ed Margerum, Head Usher
10:30 Service, (442-4027)

8:00 Service, (687-7878) 10:30 Service, (442-4027) 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!

DECEMBER

JANUARY

Ellen Barnes Richard Miller Eugene Bare Art Myers

Jan Huffman Janet Huffman Scott Shenk Ralph Shank

DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES

(Flower Deliveries)			
December	Jane Witmer		
January	Lois Snader		

WELCOME CENTER

Keo Phongxaysanith

Robert Brackbill

Robert Gingher

Johanna Gingher

Shelly Summers

David Berkhimer

Carol Berkhimer

Michael Ruhl

Jane Witmer	<u>8:00am Ser</u>	8:00am Service		10:30am Service	
Lois Snader	November	Tom & Vicki Burkins	November	Emily Birch	

Please see separate icon on the front page for the December Church Calendar Please see separate icon on the front page for the January Church Calendar Leacock Presbyterian Church 3181 Lincoln Hwy East Paradise, PA 17562

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THE LEACOCK COMMUNICATOR Editor - Vicki P. Burkins, 392-7253 vicki.burkins@gmail.com