



Leacock Communicator

Leacock Presbyterian Church

717-687-6619

www.leacockpres.org

Volume 60, Number 10

December 2019/January 2020

Notes from the Manse

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”—John 1:5

This Advent, the theme will be light, the many ways light and specifically the light of God breaks into our lives. And so, as I have been preparing for Advent, I have reflected on this theme. There are some who do not want to hear in church any reminders of the suffering and sorrows of life. Darkness will find us; we don't need to seek it. I understand. Faith offers hope, and the Lord knows, we often need its consolation. But the comfort faith gives is real precisely because it doesn't ignore heartache. Scripture does not present a false view of life. The people of the Bible suffer, from Abraham's loss of home to the mockery and loneliness of living counter to the ways of the world Paul felt. The passage above comes at the advent, the coming of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. But oh, Jesus knew darkness, rejection, misunderstanding, the darkness at noon on a cross when he asked why his God had forsaken him. We would not know light if there were not darkness. And so, sometimes, in our faith we must face the darkness.

As I pondered this theme of light, a story from my life came to mind. I have told this story before and some of you will remember it. But I think it bears repeating, for in thinking about it, I saw something new. I was in seminary, working on a Saturday night, when I got one of those phone calls we all dread. My brother told me my father was in the emergency room, that he had suffered a heart attack, and that I had better get there soon. Emily and I raced out to our car, and I drove as fast as I could, trying to get my head around what I might be facing. When we arrived and found Dad, to my astonishment he seemed fine. But then the cardiologist arrived. In an almost abstract way, he said Dad would probably die that night. There was a procedure that might save him at another hospital, but he might not survive it, and the trip there might kill him. It seemed our only chance, so we went with it. After making sure Peter could make it home OK, just before midnight Emily and I followed the ambulance in the rain to the other hospital. We were greeted by a surgeon, who told us he would do everything he could for Dad, though the odds were still against him. Emily and I were shown a private room off the ER where the long, quiet hours of waiting began. Eventually, the surgeon came and told us that Dad had made it. We drove to my father's house at dawn, so stunned, so grateful for the good news, we forgot how tired we were. We would have two more years with Dad, and he would see me graduate from seminary.

Why tell this story again? Because what I realize now is that there was light not only in the good news of that dawn. There had also been light in the darkness of that long night. There was light in the gentle grace of Emily and I being there for, with, each other. There was light in the kindness of that surgeon who knelt at our feet with a look of wonder and gladness when he told us that Dad had made it. There was light that both Emily and I felt in the presence of God there with us all those hours of waiting. We are coming on the shortest day of the year, the longest night. Our faith does not promise there will be no darkness. But what it does promise is that the light does shine in the darkness and that the darkness did not, will not ever, overcome it. Oh, let us believe it.

Rev. Robert W. Birch

December Lectionary

<p>December 1 First Sunday of Advent Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 122 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:36-44</p>	<p>December 8 Second Sunday of Advent Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-1</p>	<p>December 15 Third Sunday of Advent Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46-55 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11</p>	<p>December 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25</p>
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<p>December 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]</p>	<p>December 25 <i>Nativity of the Lord</i> <i>Christmas Dawn</i> Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 97, Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20</p>	<p><i>Christmas Day</i> Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12) John 1:1-14</p>	<p>December 29 First Sunday of Christmas Isaiah 63:7-9 Psalm 148 Hebrews 2:10-18 Matthew 2:13-23</p>
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January Lectionary

<p>January 5, 2020 Second Sunday of Christmas Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20 Ephesians 1:3-14 John 1:(1-9) 10-18</p>	<p>January 6 Epiphany of the Lord Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12</p>	<p>January 12 Baptism of the Lord 1st Sunday after the Epiphany Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13-17</p>
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<p>January 19 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-111 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-42</p>	<p>January 26 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1, 4-91 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-2</p>
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December Prayer Families

December 1
Robert, Elaine & Camila Dyer

December 8
Dean & Robbin Englehart

December 15
Linka, Kelly and David Erikson

December 22
Christine Eshleman

December 29
Darwin & Lois Eshleman

January Prayer Families

January 5
Donald, Christy, Logan
& Juliana Fieldsa

January 12
Louis & Esta Fisher

January 19
Ronald & Susan Funk

January 26
Stephen Funk



Dear Church Deacons,

The luncheon you prepared for Mary Jane Mowrer's memorial service was well done and very special. The food was delicious. The attention to detail did not go unnoticed. Everyone was so kind and thoughtful! We appreciate all of the work you did.

Thank you,

Steve Mowrer & Sally McKinney

Dear Presbyterian Women,
Thank you for the lovely prayer shawl that someone in your group made with love. It was hand delivered by Betty Sowers and Edna Homsher. Your support and love are so appreciated. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,
Tom & Nancy Pfahler

Session Snippets

The Session met with newly elected elders and deacons for a time of examining the Constitutional Questions which are asked during ordination and installation. Current elders shared what ordination has meant to them on their walk of faith as new officers shared their understanding of the call to serve. Rev. Birch closed this extremely meaningful portion of the meeting with prayer.

In committee reports Stewardship presented plans for the upcoming January church audit using two outside persons from the Presbytery. Church and Community Life plans to collect cough drops and deodorant for Pequea Valley students in January.

The following actions were taken:

- Receiving the Benevolence and Treasurer Reports.
- Scheduling the Gap Male Chorus to perform April 26.
- Approving the following volunteer positions:
Bell Choir - Karen Homsher
Beadle and Head Usher - Ed Margerum
Worship Enhancement Director - Jennifer McElhany
Historian and 8:00 a.m. Head Usher - Skip Brackbill
- Approving worship dates for 2020.
- Approving Leacock's use as a neutral pulpit January 5, 2020.
- Approving Rev. Birch's vacation/continuing education December 30, 2019 - January 6, 2020.

Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 15, 2019

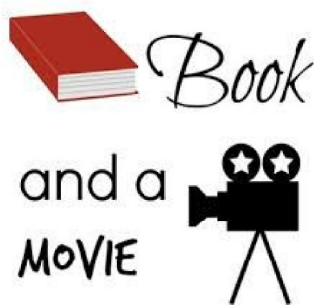


Following church service, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall for a light lunch.

After the lunch, we will car pool to visit our at-home members, spreading Christmas cheer by singing carols and delivering a small gift. Please plan to join us. Christmas carols sound so much better with more voices.

Thanks you from the CCL Committee and Deacons

Merry Christmas!



Leacock Book and Movie Group

In November, the Leacock Book and Movie Group got together to watch the movie version of *The Bookshop*. Although the movie was a bit slow, some of us came away from it thinking we liked it better than the book, basically because it offered a bit more hope.

We will be taking the month of December off (Merry Christmas, everyone!) and will pick back up in January to discuss *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* by Marie Semple. Please join us on January 17 at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner and a discussion of this funny, poignant book.

Emily Birch, Book and Movie Group Coordinator

The Connectional Church—News from Our Denomination

Last month, I introduced this new column, with the goal of letting you know some of the many things being a member of the PCUSA offers individual congregants, from the presbytery to the national level. So, I am going to pass on a few upcoming events that might interest you. On December 21st, Donegal Presbyterian Church will be offering a Celtic Evensong Service. Our Lenten Study last year looked at Celtic Christianity and this service is modeled after the Iona Community in Scotland and will include Celtic music. Next spring, from April 24-26, Rev. Patty Stoltzfus will lead a women's retreat for our presbytery entitled, "Fly While You Still Have Wings: and Other Lessons My Resilient Mother Taught Me." The retreat will be held at St. Mary's Providence Retreat Center in Elverson, PA, from Friday evening through Sunday morning. Please let me know if you any questions about these events. And stay tuned for more in the future!

Rev. Robert W. Birch

From Worship Enhancement



“The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary and I will glorify the place of my feet.” Isaiah 60:13

Christmas is on the horizon; trees will be trimmed, greens will be hung.

In addition to looking pretty, the greens we use during this holy season have meaningful symbolism.

The evergreens, cedar and hemlock, juniper, fir and pine are all mentioned in the Bible. Strong evergreens can weather fierce storms and flourish in harsh climates. Despite hardship and changing seasons, their needles and leaves remain perennially vibrant and colorful; they are ever green. They can serve as reminders of God’s steadfast presence as we weather life’s storms, and of the promise of life everlasting in Christ.

In some parts of the world another evergreen, holly, is known as “christdorn”, or “Christ Thorn”. Legend says that the prickly leaves of the plant represent the crown of thorns, its white blossoms Jesus’s purity and its red berries the blood he shed on the cross.

As for the poinsettia plant, another legend compares the starburst pattern of its leaves to the Star of Bethlehem, the light that illuminated the humble birthplace of our Savior.

As you enter the sanctuary in the coming weeks, you’ll see holly and greens in the windows, poinsettias and a decorated tree in front of the cross. May the greenery of the season help us to remember not only Christ’s birth, but that he was born to redeem us, and to offer us everlasting life.

Christmas Caring Tree 2019

Our Christmas caring tree will be in the narthex from November 17-December 8. You will notice tags of different colors. We are collecting gifts for the Marines “Toys for Tots” program in Lancaster County. We will be concentrating on two age groups-very young children ages three months to two years, and older children ages nine to twelve years of age. Our church member, Dave Berkhimer, is active with the Marines and has been helping with this collection for years. He will help us deliver the gifts to the Lancaster County program. Possible gifts for the younger children are infant toys, and they are usually marked with the appropriate ages. The older children might like model kits, jewelry, science kits, games, and brain challenging games.. All gifts should be not wrapped but put in a bag with the tag you took from the tree attached to the top.

You will also notice some tags asking for gift cards for stores in our area. These gift cards will be for “The Bridge of Hope” program in Lancaster. We have collected for this program for the past seven years, and they really appreciate our support. The gift cards are for Weis, Target, Turkey Hill, Giant, Walmart, Wawa and others. These cards may be for amounts from \$10 - \$25. They will be delivered to Bridge of Hope office in Lancaster. These cards will help support young mothers struggling to make ends meet in Lancaster County. Last year we presented 23 gift cards to Bridge of Hope. Please give all gift cards to a CCL Committee person - Margy Hershey, Charlene Boas, Lori Smith, Shirley Smith or Mary Alice High or Sandy our secretary.

Worship

Advent/Christmas Worship

December 1 - *Family Advent Celebration*

9:00 a.m. Covered Dish brunch in
the Narthex and Sunday School rooms
Worship in the Sanctuary
Singing YOUR favorite carols
Reading of a new "Christmas Tale (Tail)"
Communion by Intinction

December 8 - 9:30 a.m. Worship Featuring the Bell Choir

December 15 - 9:30 a.m. Worship
Caroling to At-Home members
following worship and a light lunch

December 22 - 9:30 a.m. Worship featuring the Chancel Choir

December 24

7:00 p.m. - Family Worship at Paradise
Bell Choir
Candle Lighting

11:00 p.m. - Old Leacock Christmas Eve Worship
Lessons and Carols
Candle Lighting

December 30 - 9:30 a.m. Worship

Come and Worship
Come and Worship
Worship Christ the New Born King

Christmas Bazaar

Trees, Treats, and Treasures

Saturday December 7

8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*'Twas three weeks till Christmas and all through the church
"The excitement is brewing!" — exclaimed Rev. Birch.*

*The bonbons were dipped, boxed and sampled by some
While cookies were plated and toy trains were run.*

*Greens had been placed on the wreaths and in vases
And ornaments tucked into various places.*

*There were trees and red Santas and angels and lights
And lots of sparkling candles to light up the night.*

*The cards how they shone with their greetings of joy,
The earrings and bracelets for all to employ.*

*There were spiders to place on the trees by the stable
And octopi, dragonflies filling the tables.*

*When what to our wondering eyes should appear
But a miniature village in full snowy gear.
With houses and lamps and churches and trees
All begging to find a new home — pretty please.*

*We want you to come and enjoy Christmas shopping
While browsing and snacking, and cafe table hopping.*

*At the end of the day as the treats disappear
We wish all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

*The sewing, gluing, baking, creating, crafting, sorting, pricing, selecting, arranging is done!
Tables in the Narthex and Smith Hall await you*

Remember Our At Home Members this Christmas

Lucy Ames
Lancashire Hall Rm. #311A
2829 Lititz Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-569-3211

Dalin Appel
P.O. Box 514
Leola, PA 17540
Birthday: **December 30**

Ruth Bair
15 N. Kinzer Rd.
Kinzers, PA 17535
717-442-8166

William Berkhimer
1614 Bentley Ridge Blvd.
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-293-8782
Birthday: **January 9**

Arlene Brackbill Rm. #513A
Pleasant View Retirement Community
544 N. Penryn Rd.
Manheim, PA 17545

Betty Denlinger
Brethren Village Courtyard
3001 Lititz Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601

Joy Koshuta
1872 Sandhill Rd.
Hershey, PA 17033
(717)533-6530
Birthday: **December 9**



Helen Krieder
Masonic Village, Rm. #1862
600 Freemason Dr.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Miriam Latshaw
1520 Harrisburg Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-490-8610

Kitty Shumate
433 S. Kinzer Ave. Apt. 443 GE
New Holland, PA 17557
717-355-6900

Richard Smith
Conestoga View Rm. #308 NE4
900 E. King St.
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-6820557(his cell)

Virginia Stauffer
113 Summers Drive
Lancaster PA 17601-5860
717-517-8775

Ruth Usner Rm.#116
Oakleaf Manor
3901 Harrisburg Pike
Landisville, PA 17538

Mildred Young
Luther Acres Manor
400 St. Luke Drive Rm. 309
Lititz, PA 17543
717-626-1171 ext.1300

Mission Committee



This month's free community meal will be served on December 12 because of the Christmas holiday. The menu will be Ham, Scallop Potatoes, Pepper Cabbage and Green Beans. Our January meal will return to the last Thursday as usual, January 30, and will be Pork & Sauerkraut, Mashed Potatoes, Hot Dogs, Peas and Applesauce. The December sign up sheets for food donations and to help prepare, cook, serve and clean up are in the narthex.

December is when we take our **Christmas Joy Offering**. Special giving envelopes will be in the pews for the month. As we celebrate this Advent and Christmas season, let us also celebrate the gift and example Christ has given us with our generosity of spirit.

Please remember January is the month that we collect the **Blanket Offering**. Many people around the world do not have the privilege of owning a blanket, something most of us take for granted. Through Church World Service, we are able to help these people obtain their own blanket. The special envelopes will be in the pews on three Sundays in January, January 12, January 19, and January 26.

Thanks to all our volunteers and donators. The Mission Committee wishes you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Gratitude Corner

(Those Who Go Above and Beyond to Care for their Minister and His Wife)

Bob would like to thank ALL of you who make his birthday special with kind words, cards, and phone calls. We'd like to single out a few people, though, who made his day more beautiful than it otherwise might have been. Thank you, thank you to David and Janet Birch for dedicating the flowers on the altar to him, as well as to Evie Lopez, who always makes beautiful arrangements and certainly made a gorgeous one for this occasion. We will certainly miss your special gift of flower arranging, Evie, once you move on to the next chapter of your life in December.

Rev. Robert and Emily Birch

BLOOD DRIVE SCHEDULE DECEMBER 2019

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!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place and Time</u>	
Wednesday, December 4	White Horse Fire Co	2:00pm
Wednesday, December 11	Kinzer Fire Co	2:00pm
Thursday, December 12	Intercourse Fire Co	2:00pm
Thursday, December 26	LG Hospital-3rd Floor Balcony James St.	2:00pm

The Lancaster General Suburban Outpatient Pavilion (Health Campus) Blood Drive is located in Building 2104, Suite 202. The hours on Monday are 10 am -7:30 pm, Tuesday and Thursday 8am to 4pm, Wednesday and Friday 8:00 am to 6 pm,. For more information call 717-544-0170.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

You may purchase a Christmas Poinsettia for \$8.00 to be placed in the sanctuary in memory/honor of someone. Please complete and return this form and money to the church office by **Sunday, December 15.**

The ones remembered and by whom will appear in the Sunday bulletin on December 22. Remember to advise the church if you plan to leave your poinsettia to be taken to an at-home member.

I/We _____ wish to order _____ Christmas Poinsettia(s)

in memory of _____

or in honor of _____

Please place a in the box if your plant(s) is to be taken to an at-home member by our deacons.

Order Forms will also be available in the Narthex

USHERS

Ed Margerum, Head Usher

December	Craig Keenan & Darwin Eshleman
January	George & Karen Shue
February	Dave & Carol Berkhimer

**December Nursery
On Call**



SUNDAY SCHOOL

December

12/1	Family Advent Day	No Class
12/8	9:30 a..m.	Carol Shearer & Marie Brackbill
12/15	9:30 a..m.	Emily Birch & Linda Erikson
12/22	Christmas Crafts	Danielle Short & Carol Berkhimer
12/29	Christmas Break	No Class

January

1/5	9:30 a..m.	Kathy & Chuck Ankney
1/12	9:30 a..m.	Kathy & Chuck Ankney
1/19	9:30 a..m.	Jennifer McElhany & Shirley Smith
1/26	9:30 a.m.	Jennifer McElhany & Shirley Smith

February

2/2	9:30 a..m.	Carol & Dave Berkhimer
2/9	9:30 a..m.	Carol & Dave Berkhimer
2/16	9:30 a..m.	Michele & Lea Lichty
2/23	9:30 a.m.	Michele & Lea Lichty

Leacock Presbyterian Church
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Articles for the February Newsletter
Are due by Monday, January 27, 2020

THE LEACOCK COMMUNICATOR
Sandy Schoettle, Editor

The Leacock Communicator