



Leacock Communicator

Leacock Presbyterian Church

717-687-6619

www.leacockpres.org

Volume 61, Number 8

December 2020

Notes from the Manse

It is with sadness that in this newsletter we must tell you that worship once again will for a time be fully remote. What this means is that we will not be having a kind of hybrid worship, in which some gather in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, while others join us later through our website. Our services will continue to be recorded and made available to anyone with access to the internet. This was not an easy decision. As noted in our clerk's article, the Session spent almost an hour weighing all the implications of such a move. In the end, with the cases of COVID-19 increasing daily by so much, it was decided that we needed to do everything we could to keep each other safe.

I know that this will disappoint some of you. I understand, for it disappoints me too. Yes, our in-person worship has been limited—not being able to sing together has really been missed. But I still so value having people there, in the pews, sharing in worship with me. You probably have no idea how strange it can feel to lead a service in an almost empty sanctuary. And I further am so proud of how Leacock's congregation has risen to the occasion. We have had no one argue about masks or social distancing. As attendance has increased, people volunteered to go to the overflow room. We did so much, so much so well that other churches in the Presbytery have asked me about how we are doing things. But now, it appears that even all this isn't enough. And I am not alone in feeling this way. I can tell you that Dianne had a real adjustment at first playing our music in a pretty empty sanctuary in the early days of the pandemic. She loves playing with people there with her.

Selfishly, I might well have urged the Session to stay with the hybrid worship model we have had since the July 4th weekend. But our faith so clearly insists that we put aside what we want if that is needed to care for, to serve others. In the earliest church, there was a great controversy. The first followers of Jesus were Jewish, and they were reluctant to give up all they had ever known of faith. Yet, as *Acts* and *Galatians* show, Paul and Peter both were moved by the Holy Spirit to put aside what they wished so that other people, Gentiles, could most readily receive the good news of Jesus Christ. We can't even begin to imagine how hard that must have been. Judaism in many ways had defined them, especially Paul. Yet in the end, there was grace, the surrender of what they as individuals wanted so that others could be saved. Well, here we are. I might want to continue to have in-person worship. But I—we—are called to follow our Lord, to put aside ourselves, to put aside ourselves for others. If we had stayed with our in-person worship, perhaps no one would have gotten sick; blessedly, no one has so far. But if one person were to become sick with this virus, really sick, I could never forgive myself. I—we—are called to care for each other, for our neighbors, our sisters and brothers. And ultimately, that is what the Session decided we had to do in this time.

We are not alone in this. Many churches across the Presbytery have already returned to fully remote worship; some never offered in-person worship. It is hard. There is a real value in being together, and some of the sad, sad, costs of this pandemic have been loneliness and disconnection. And, of course, there are some who have not returned to the sanctuary in order to keep safe; they haven't even been able to experience the limited in-person worship we have had. Yet, they continue to join us through the recorded services. I know, because I hear from them, how much they look forward to them. And the pandemic is indeed getting worse. Just today a new mask mandate was announced.

But through Christ, in Christ, with Christ, we are stronger than this virus. The pandemic will end. Now three vaccines have shown promise. Before they become readily available, this winter may well be dark and cold. But we can still have worship that is filled with light and warmth; we are already exploring ways to do just that in our recorded services. Each month, the Session will review the question of whether worship should be hybrid or fully remote. But until we are finally fully together again, in-person, we can and we will be together in our love for each other, our caring.

Earlier I mentioned how hard it can be to do a worship service in what might seem an empty sanctuary. But that's wrong. The sanctuary is never empty, for the Spirit of the Lord is there, always. And that Spirit is there even when we worship across the miles from each other. This year, this 2020, has felt so often like a flood of challenges, a raging fire of anger and mistrust and fear. It is a broken world and we are broken people. But we do not need to concede to anger or mistrust or fear. We can meet the challenges that come. How? Because we are not alone, ever. As we enter this season of Advent, let us remember, let us take strength from, the word of the Lord as recorded by Isaiah—


“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flames shall not consume you.”

Rev. Robert W. Birch

The **Christian Ed. Committee** is well aware that for some time now the traditional **learning that Christians do for spiritual growth has been on hold**. We recognize that this has been necessary to keep people safe during the pandemic. Still, we believe this may be a good time to reflect on what might be possible, what other, new ways there might be for faith formation for adults and youth. We are looking at such things as studies via Zoom. But we want your input. What ideas do you have for learning together even while we are apart? Already, the Women's Bible Study is being held through Zoom. What else might we do? As mentioned, the Education Committee has started a list of possibilities. But we want to hear from you. Please call and leave a message if necessary, with your input to help prepare for old and new ways to share and learn: Elaine Gouba 717-445-5802; email jegouba@ptd.net, or Rev. Birch.

December Lectionary

<p>December 6 Second Sunday of Advent Isaiah 40:1–11 Psalm 85:1–2, 8–132 Peter 3:8–15a Mark 1:1–8</p>	<p>December 13 Third Sunday of Advent Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11 Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b–551 Thessalonians 5:16–24 John 1:6–8, 19–28</p>	<p>December 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16 Luke 1:46b–55 or Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26 Romans 16:25–27 Luke 1:26–38</p>
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<p>December 24 Nativity of the Lord Christmas Eve Isaiah 9:2–7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11–14 Luke 2:1–14 [15–20]</p> 	<p>December 25 Nativity of the Lord Christmas Dawn Isaiah 62:6–12 Psalm 97 Titus 3:4–7 Luke 2:[1–7] 8–20</p> <p>Christmas Day Isaiah 52:7–10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1–4 [5–12] John 1:1–14</p>	<p>December 27 First Sunday of Christmas Isaiah 61:10—62:3 Psalm 148 Galatians 4:4–7 Luke 2:22–40</p>
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Thank You!

I appreciate the cards sent to me as an at-home member. When my sister asked whether I had any contact with church members, I was proud to say I had gotten about 10 cards from women of Leacock. Thank you!

Fondly,
Miriam Latshaw

P.S. I hope the women had a good time picking out the “right” card for each person.

I would like to thank everybody for the many notes and phone calls. I am receiving during the pandemic. I am doing well.

In God’s love,
Gerry Hess



Thanks to all the church members for their prayers, phone calls and thoughtful notes this past year. They help to fill the hours of long days.

My computer brings me nature pictures of birds, flowers, waterfalls, and historical stories. I welcome any news at summerplacepg@aol.com

Thanks,
Betty Denlinger



Prayer Families December

December 6
George & Karen Shue

December 13
Kitty Shumate

December 20
Dick & Debbie Sindall

December 27
Lori A. Smith



Flowers for the Church

You may purchase flowers for the sanctuary on **December 27** in honor of or in memory of someone or a special occasion.

Call the church office
717-687-6619

Trustee Notes

Workday was a big success because of the 14 people that turned out to help keep the church in good condition.

For your information there is a Boy Scout fixing the fence at Old Leacock in order to get his Eagle Scout badge. He and his helpers fixed up the posts, replaced a lot of the boards and painted the fence white. They also fixed up the shed that stores the mower for the cemetery. If you are driving by some day stop and take a good look.

The Trustees want to thank everyone for their support in the maintaining of the church properties.

Dave Berkhimer
President

Session Snippets

The Session has held three meetings since our last newsletter, all via Zoom. Rev. Birch has become quite adept at setting up these meetings, managing discussions, and counting votes. Elders, too, are becoming more skilled at each meeting, learning how to turn video and audio on and off. However, none of us is ready to apply for an advanced technology degree.

The usual business of the church — setting and approving a 2021 budget, approving the slate of nominees for church officers, examining the financial reports, and hearing reports from the pastor and clerk — has been carried out faithfully.

These unprecedented times, however, have called for difficult, in-depth discussions about hard issues. Acknowledging the growing spread of the coronavirus, elders decided to cancel our traditional Thanksgiving Eve service and both in-person Christmas Eve services. We also scheduled Communion for the first Sunday in Advent, November 29.

The most difficult decision for your Session revolved around whether to continue our hybrid worship or return to a fully remote format. Thoughtful, insightful, faith-filled comments were exchanged as we worked toward a decision. After nearly an hour, the motion to go fully remote beginning December 6 with the Session reexamining the decision for remote worship on a monthly basis was passed.

Your Session asks for your prayers for wisdom and discernment as we move forward.

Dianne Yuninger
Clerk of Session

Mission Committee

The Mission committee would like to wish everyone a joyous and happy holiday season. Trust in the lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones. Honor the lord with your possessions, and with the first fruit of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. My son do not despise the chastening of the lord, nor detest his correction; For whom the lord loves he corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:5-12). Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.



The month of December is our **Christmas Joy Offering** month. Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world—past, present, and future. For some, these gifts have taken the form of Emergency Assistance Grants. For others, it is in the form of scholarships to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, allowing students to not only receive an excellent education, but to explore their faith intimately to become better leaders with values, ethics, and moral character. 50% of your gifts make this possible. The other 50% will provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. Leading up to Christmas, many of us search for the perfect gift - the gift that communicates to friends and family how much we know and love them. We know that the only perfect gift ever given was the one we received in Jesus Christ - a perfect gift from a gracious God. Although we cannot give the perfect gift, we can give generously, knowing as the New Testament in the book of James says, "every generous act of giving...is from above." Please join us in the Christmas Joy Offering. When we share these gifts, we can make a big difference.

Worship Committee

"Silent Night, Holy Night
All is calm, All is bright"

All of us love this gentle, familiar carol, and many of us cherish the tradition of singing it together as we light candles in a darkened sanctuary, bringing the Light of the World into our midst.

Little did we know in March as we finished Lent and then celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord that we would still be dealing with a pandemic in December. Little did we know so many cherished activities would have to be sacrificed to keep our brothers and sisters safe. Yet here we are.

Although we will not be able to gather in-person for Advent services and Christmas Eve, do not be disheartened or discouraged. Christmas will come, Christ will be born again and again, the Kingdom of God will reign.

Rev. Birch is planning on recording a Christmas Eve service which will be available online for you and your family. For just this year, why not plan a new "tradition"? Wearing comfortable clothing and sipping hot chocolate, gather in front of your Christmas tree and listen to Leacock's worship. When the organ plays the wonderful carols, sing along as a family. When Rev. Birch reads the sacred story, listen together as a family. And at the conclusion of the service, light your own candles and sing "Silent Night."

"Joy to the World! The Lord Has Come!"

Fifty Year Members

Ruth Usner	December 29, 1943	Vicki Burkins	April 10, 1960
Robert Clark	April 19, 1946	Dianne Yuninger	April 10, 1960
Helen Kreider	October 4, 1946	Carol Shearer	April 15, 1962
Ruth Bair	April 6, 1947	James L. Brackbill	April 15, 1962
Ruth Anne Appel	April 17, 1949	David Homsher	April 15, 1962
Robert Mowrer, Jr.	April 17, 1949	Lois Eshleman	April 15, 1962
Mildred Young	April 17, 1949	Esta Fisher	April 15, 1962
Arlene Brackbill	April 17, 1949	Kitty Shumate	May 2, 1965
Jane Witmer	April 6, 1950	Kirk Beane	May 2, 1965
Betty Denlinger	January 7, 1951	Ed Margerum	April 13, 1966
Lucy Ames	July 20, 1952	Tom Burkins	October 1967
Harold Yuninger	November 1, 1953	Robert Brackbill	October 6, 1968
Betty Sowers	April 3, 1955	Bonnie Rice	October 6, 1968
Mary Ellen Rice	March 25, 1956	Skip Brackbill	May 4, 1969
Janet Cosby	April 14, 1957	Loretta McClarigan	March 22, 1970
Donald Clark	August 5, 1957	Stephen Shreiner Mowrer	March 22, 1970
Ruth Bryson	March 13, 1958		
H. Donald Andrews	December 21, 1958		
Beatrice Andrews	December 21, 1958		

<p>Nominating Committee Ballot</p> <p><u>Candidates for Trustees</u> David Berkhimer Joe Gouba Danielle Short They will be serving with Charles Ankney, Richard Buck, David Homsher, Keo Phongxaysanith, Michael Ruhl, and Scott Shenk</p> <p><u>Candidates for Elders</u> Marsha Ault Brit Kilbourne Angela Killian Bonnie Rice Alba Ruhl Lori Smith They will be serving with Mark Andrews, Steven Boas, Christian Brackbill, Derek Colton, Elaine Gouba, and Dianne Yuninger</p>	<p><u>Candidates for Deacon</u> Barb Andrews Molly Colton Bob Hershey Shirley Smith</p> <p>They will be serving with Carol Berkhimer, Darwin Eshleman, Esta Fisher, Karen Homsher, Michele Lichty, Edwin Margerum, Debbie Sindall, and Sharon Williams</p>
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Please Remember our At Home Members this Holiday Season

Lucy Ames
Lancashire Hall Rm. #311A
2829 Lititz Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-569-3211
Birthday: August 12

Dalin Appel Rm. 108
Rose City
425 N. Duke St.
Lancaster, PA 17602
Birthday: December 30

Ruth Bair
604 Oak St.
Akron, PA 17501
Birthday: September 29

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

Arlene Brackbill Rm. #513A
Pleasant View Retirement Community
544 N. Penryn Rd.
Manheim, PA 17545
Birthday: April 5

Betty Denlinger Apt. 320
4 Conestoga Dr.
Lititz, PA 17543

Joyce Hamme
c/o Elaine Lewis
2754 Welsh Rd.
Mohnton, PA 19540

Helen Krieder
Masonic Village, Rm. W. #1862
600 Freemason Dr.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
Birthday: March 23

Miriam Latshaw
1520 Harrisburg Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-490-8610
Birthday: February 28

Kitty Shumate
433 S. Kinzer Ave.
Apt. 443 GE
New Holland, PA 17557
717-355-6900
Birthday: May 20

Virginia Stauffer
113 Summers Drive
Lancaster PA 17601-5860
717-517-8775
Birthday: July 22

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

Jane Witmer
Fairmount Homes
333 Wheat Ridge Dr.
Ephrata, PA 17522

Mildred Young
Luther Acres Manor
400 St. Luke Drive Rm. 309
Lititz, PA 17543
717-626-1171 ext.1300
Birthday: April 15



Peanut Butter Bonbons

We will be making peanut butter bonbons Monday, December 7 at 10:00am. Call Carol Shearer if you would like to help make them or donate supplies. You can order bonbons by calling the church office or Carol Shearer and make arrangements to pick them up at the church or have them delivered. We will have milk chocolate, dark chocolate, or mixed at a cost of \$6.50 per container.



Leacock Book and Movie Group

The Leacock book and movie group will gather via Zoom on Friday January 15 to discuss the book *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. Please let me know if you would like to attend, so I can send you a link to join. It's been a long time, and I'm eager to get together with everyone and discuss a good book! Hope you-all are, too.

Emily Birch, Book and Movie Group Coordinator



Gratitude Corner

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

As this pandemic year drags on, I just want to say a general thank you to all of you, really. I'm so impressed with the way members of this church have continued to care for each other and to care for us during this difficult year. Most recently, we received so much attention the week Bob had his surgery, and we so much appreciated that. It's fun to open the door to discover someone has left a little something for you! But that's only the most recent example. We've felt special attention from our loving Leacock family members all year. So thank you for your love!

Rev. Robert and Emily Birch

Church and Community Life Committee

Due to the presence of covid-19, we have not had our monthly Thursday Paradise Area Community Meal at the church since March. We will be sending some of the money budgeted for this to the Paradise Factory Food Bank.



Last year we collected gift cards in the amount of \$10 to \$25 for the Bridge of Hope which is now **Good Samaritan Services**. They are in Lancaster at 616 N. Lime Street and they currently are helping 18 families mostly women and children, but some men now as well. We would like to support their efforts again this year for those in need. Suggested gift cards can be from; Wawa, Turkey Hill, Giant, Walmart, Weis Market, Shop Rite, Target and Aldi. We will be collecting the gift cards up to December 13th. If you cannot get them to the church in person or by mail, I will be happy to pick them up at your home.

Also, we are collecting for Toys for Tots with the help of Dave Berkheimer and the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation. There is a box in the narthex to put the toys in. The need is gifts for children 2 and under as well as ages 9 to 12 years old. Dave will be picking up the toys no later than December 6th.

I know these requests are short notice but are still very important and worthy of our support, we hope you will participate. For either **Good Samaritan Services** or **Toys for Tots** if you want to make a monetary gift, we can get the gift cards or gifts on your behalf. Mark can be reached at 717-808-7821

Committee members, Margie Hershey, Lori Smith, Mary Alice High and Mark Andrews



Stewardship

Hello my fellow congregants and friends of Leacock! As we near the end of the year you may be surprised to see I am not writing the typical plea for year end giving to make up a deficit of actual offering to planned budget, which although planned for, is still an "in faith" estimate. We recently approved the budget for 2021 at the November Congregational meeting, with a very modest increase and we hope, pray and have faith that the congregation will support that budget. Given the year this world, our country, our congregation has endured and continues to endure, one may not understand the continued support you have given our Church. The fact is, we need that support in the form of offering to operate, and continue to be a force for good, helping others in our area and the world over. During this year of pandemic, social injustice, social unrest, political upheaval (the list could go on) the Leacock congregation has continued to support! Thanks to your strength of purpose and grounding in Christian charity. This gives me faith that Leacock as a force for good will continue in 2021 and for years beyond. Simply put: Thank you Leacock for your support thus far in 2020, thank you for your CONTINUED support the remainder of this crazy year AND into the future. A future where we WILL again worship together in person, shake each other's hands, hug a friend, meet visitors, share a meal together and go out to help others as a team. Until then, we have been and will continue to be as creative as possible, to keep connected, to keep worshipping and keep working for our Church. As I said months ago at the beginning of the pandemic, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. This congregation is tough.

Leacock Presbyterian Church
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THE LEACOCK COMMUNICATOR

Sandy Schoettle, Editor