



Leacock Communicator

Leacock Presbyterian Church

717-687-6619

www.leacockpres.org

Volume 62, Number 9 December 2021/January 2022

Notes from the Manse

Last month, I offered the image of Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, endings, doorways, thresholds, for you and Emily and I stand on a threshold as my ministry in Paradise is nearing its end. I mentioned then I had only two more Notes from the Manse to write. And so last month, I looked backward from the threshold, reflecting on these years we have walked together with the Lord. The present for all of us can surely seem at times overwhelming and exhausting, filled with so much to do in often surprising ways as we prepare for change. The Session has been searching for a pastor to lead you through a time of transition, a process inevitably filled with both complications and delights. Emily and I have been facing the dual task of getting all we have here ready to be moved and a place prepared to receive all that and us. In all this, it somehow feels fitting that we are entering Advent, for Advent is about preparing for a change, for the coming of the Lord of grace. When we think back to that first time of waiting, we see that it too was a difficult, uncertain time. The people lived in an occupied land; the faith of those people, the forms of their religion, were confused; and poor people, parents and shepherds, greeted a baby.

Traditionally, it is a baby that symbolizes a new year, and that feels right. For just as new parents do not know what their child will one day become, nor do we know how a new year will unfold. All that parents can do is care for, nurture, guide, and love that child; all we can do each year is similarly give ourselves to the days before us, seeking to build and heal, seeking to love. As you and Emily and I stand on the threshold, that is all we can do too, seek to do the work of grace and peace so as to nurture the new before us.

At times over the years, I have referred to a quote attributed to Martin Luther—"If I believed the world were to end tomorrow, I would still plant a tree today." It turns out there is no evidence that Luther actually said this, and many scholars attribute it rather to the Confessing Church in Germany as something intended to sustain hope and perseverance as they opposed the Nazi regime. If that's true, well, it only makes the quote more powerful. We do not know what the future will hold and the present may seem so complicated that we may fear it will be bad. But still, it is a good thing to make a statement of purpose and faith, to plant a tree. Many of you know I planted a tree in the front of the Manse 2 ½ years ago. Back then, the river birch was only a couple of feet high, small enough to keep it in the kitchen sink till I was ready to plant it. I had been told there was no guarantee it would take, and as I have watched some of the trees planted in Paradise Park grow while others died, I learned that was true. So I did what I could—I watered it to feed it; I weeded it to keep it from being stunted or hurt; I staked it so it would grow straight. And that tree not only took root. To my delight, it has grown astonishingly, now some 14 feet tall, beyond what it might usually be in two years. It's not been possible without the help of others, who have watered it when I was away, who helped me stake it better when it got big.

I have no idea what the future of my tree will be when Emily and I gone. I hope it will grow to its full height and be strong and thrive. But still there is uncertainty, as cars and trucks have plowed through the Manse's front yard before, to give but one example. But in the time and opportunity I had, I never stopped working towards its future, as uncertain as it was and is. I did so with hope and faith, digging in the soil, accepting help. There is another side to Advent. Not only do we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ that was; we prepare them also for the coming again, for a future, no matter how broken and confusing the world may seem now. Perhaps the lessons of Advent can be something we carry with us as we step across the threshold into the new, you and Emily and I. Perhaps we can do our best to prepare for the future, to make it bright, by doing the work of caring I—and others with me—did for my tree, a work of feeding and weeding and staking. Think of the candles we light in the Advent wreath, the lights of hope, love, joy, and peace, ending with the Christ candle, which is really where we begin in faith. This I believe—if you and Emily and I cross the threshold before us with faith and hope, grounded in love, God will walk with us and that future will be one of joy and peace.

Rev. Robert W. Birch

A Giving of Thanks from the Stewardship Committee





November is a month known for thanksgiving and so we wanted in our monthly article to give thanks to those of you who faithfully, generously support your church. By the time you read this, we will have entered the season of Advent, which has many meanings. One of them is giving, the giving we do with those we love, and most of all the giving, the grace, all the free gifts we receive from God, especially the gift of God's Son. This congregation has always been a giving congregation. In the spirit of true stewardship, that giving has taken a variety of forms. We thank all of you who work, often behind the scenes, in the caring for this church, its people, its grounds, its buildings. To see people raking, spreading mulch, cleaning windows and many other tasks on workday;

to glimpse the preparation before and the cleanup afterward for a meal like breakfast on Family Advent Sunday; to share Communion that many hands have put together—all of this is stewardship; all of this is giving. Now, people tend to be more reluctant to talk about money, the financial side of stewardship. But it is important. Your offerings make all the forms of ministry and mission we do, for others, among ourselves, possible. So, we do thank you for your tithes and offerings. Some give one large gift that serves for the whole year and that is wonderful—we received one in October that helped make our month and year so far strong. We so appreciate gifts such as these. But we also appreciate the smaller gifts that come in each week and often, over the course of a year, become quite large themselves. And so Leacock goes, as we always have. Past disagreements and all the personal ups and downs of life, we have shared the gifts we have been given, our time, talents, and treasure, with God, with each other, with all God's people. As we enter this season of giving, please prayerfully consider what you too might give to your church. We thank you, so much, for all of your gifts.

December Lectionary

<p>December 5 Second Sunday of Advent Malachi 3:1–4 Luke 1:68–79 Philippians 1:3–11 Luke 3:1–6</p>	<p>December 12 Third Sunday of Advent Zephaniah 3:14–20 Isaiah 12:2–6 Philippians 4:4–7 Luke 3:7–18</p>	<p>December 19 Fourth 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)</p>
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<p>December 24 Nativity of the Lord Christmas Eve Isaiah 9:2–7 Psalm 96:1–13 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 97:1–12 Titus 3:4–7 Luke 2:(1–7) 8–20</p> <p>Christmas Day Isaiah 52:7–10 Psalm 98:1–9 Hebrews 1:1–4 (5–12) John 1:1–14</p>	<p>December 26 First Sunday of Christmas 1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12–17 Luke 2:41–52</p> 
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January Lectionary

<p>January 2 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 Isaiah 60:1–6 Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14 Ephesians 3:1–12 Matthew 2:1–12</p>	<p>January 9 Baptism of the Lord Isaiah 43:1–7 Psalm 29 Acts 8:14–17 Luke 3:15–17, 21–22</p>
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<p>January 16 Second Sunday after the Epiphany Isaiah 62:1–5 Psalm 36:5–10 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 John 2:1–11</p>	<p>January 23 Third Sunday after the Epiphany Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 8–10 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 12:12–31a Luke 4:14–21</p>	<p>January 30 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany Jeremiah 1:4–10 Psalm 71:1–6 1 Corinthians 13:1–13 Luke 4:21–30</p>
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Dear Church Family,

Ron sends his thanks for the cards, prayers, and beautiful flowers. We are grateful for your concern.

Thank you for the flowers for Austin's baptism. What a welcoming celebration. What a joy to be part of such a caring congregation!

Ron & Sue, Steve, Jayme, Mason and Austin Funk

Session Snippets

The Session met in November to complete a final interview with a candidate for Leacock's interim pastor position. As soon as terms of call are finalized, the congregation will be informed. The plan is to have this person in place February 1.

In other business, the Session examined our financial reports, approved building use for the Brackbill Christmas Party December 26, and heard a report from the Technology Committee.



Prayer Families

December

December 5
Robert, Elaine, Camilla, and Valentina Dyer

December 12
Dean R. Jr. & Robbin Englehart

December 19
Stephan Englehart

December 26
Linda & David Erikson

January

January 2
Christine Eshleman

January 9
Darwin & Lois Eshleman

January 16
Donald, Christy, Logan & Juliana Fieldsa

January 23
Louis & Esta Fisher

January 30
Ronald & Susan Funk



If you would like to purchase flowers for the sanctuary in honor or in memory of someone or a special occasion, **January 9, January 23, and January 30** are available. Please call the church office 717-687-6619.



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 Tuesday, December 14.

The ones remembered and by whom will appear in the Sunday bulletin on December 19, 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 \checkmark 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

Please remember our At-Home Members
with Cards or Notes this Holiday season



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

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

Alba Buck
14 Cherry Hill Rd.
Ronks, PA 17572
717-687-8607
Birthday: **April 14**

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
717-581-5664

Joyce Hamme
c/o Elaine Lewis
2754 Welsh Rd.
Mohnton, PA 19540
Birthday: **Nov. 1**

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

Virginia Stauffer
Mountain View Apt. B20
433 So. Kinzer Ave.
New Holland, PA 17509
717-351-4799
Birthday: **July 22**

Jane Witmer
378 Yellow Hill Drive
Narvon, PA 17555
717-333-8475

Mildred Young
Rm. 207 Wilbur Square
Luther Acres Manor
400 St. Luke Drive
Lititz, PA 17543
717-626-1171 ext.1300
Birthday: **April 15**

Worship Committee News

And before we know it, Advent has arrived— that season of preparation for the coming of the Christ Child once again into this hurting world. We are planning our full complement of Christmas Eve services and urge you to plan joining us at one or both as we light the candles which symbolize the Light of the World which is with us.

January 16 marks the final Sunday of Bob's ministry, and we are planning a celebratory worship service which will be followed by a party in Fellowship Hall. Plan now to join us.

January 16

9:30 a.m. Worship

Gathering in Fellowship Hall

Meal

Celebration of Ministry

Although we may be sad because Bob is retiring and he and Emily will no longer be here with us, we also rejoice in the fourteen and a half years they have ministered to us. To celebrate is only natural.

After worship, everyone is invited to go to Fellowship Hall for a prepared meal and a time of memories and well wishes.

Put the date on your calendar NOW and plan to join us as we thank Bob for his selfless service and bid Emily and him farewell

Leacock Book and Movie Group

The Leacock Book and Movie Group had a week of technical difficulties and had to postpone its meeting scheduled for Friday Oct. 22 to Friday Oct. 29. We're sorry this happened. The next and last meeting of the year will be on Friday Dec. 10, and we will be discussing a classic, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. For most of us, this will probably be a reread, but some of us haven't read it since high school or college (hand raised here), so it should be like reading something again for the first time.

On Friday January 7, we will gather one more time to watch the movie version, before Bob I take off to the Great White North. Please join us on both dates and bring a covered dish to share as we gather for a potluck dinner beforehand.



Emily Birch, Book and Movie Group Coordinator



Gratitude Corner

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

I often find myself a little bit amazed by the things people remember Bob and I tell them. I'm even more amazed when they then follow up on these things in kind ways. For years, when June Stannard still lived in the area, she would give Bob and me a big box of clementines at Christmas time. We love clementines, and this was always such a treat. Well, recently, I reminded her of that and how much we appreciated it. Wouldn't you know, Bob walked into the house just this morning carrying a big bag of clementines from June! I wondered how on earth she'd gotten them here. He said she'd enlisted the help of Sandy. What a surprise and how wonderful!

Thank you, thank you, **June** and your faithful helper **Sandy Schoettle** for bringing in the holiday season for us with clementines!

Emily Birch

How can you help?

The Deacons need to update their list of potential helpers. Please indicate where you would be willing to help and mail the questionnaire back to the church office or return it in person to the back of the church.

Make a meal

Deliver a meal

Visit

Provide transportation to church

Provide transportation to doctors or other appointments

Do some grocery shopping

OTHER _____

Your
name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Make sure your name, address and phone number is included above. Thank you for helping.

Leacock Presbyterian Church
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DECEMBER - JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Articles for the February Newsletter
will be due Monday, January 24, 2022

THE LEACOCKCOMMUNICATOR
Sandy Schoettle, Editor

The Leacock Communicator

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