

# The Grapevine

December 2023



*Celebrate the birth of Christ together!*

## *Children's Christmas Program*

*Saturday, December 9th  
5:00pm*

*Followed by a  
FREE dinner  
for everyone*

### **5:00pm - Christmas Program**

Led by the children with lots of congregational singing! A number of our neighborhood youth group children are participating this year. Let's make them and their parents feel welcome!

### **5:30pm - Congregational Christmas Dinner**

*Donations to cover food costs accepted at the meal*

Sign-up on the sheet on the Information Table or call the church office to make dinner reservations.

Please contact Janine Macdonald or Diane Carlsen to help in the kitchen.



## White Christmas

Once things start to get colder and it doesn't seem the weather will warm up anytime soon, I'm ready for snow. We're already getting below-freezing temperatures, so why not at least have something nice to look at while we're sitting in our cars, waiting for the heat to

kick on and the front windshield to defrost?

There's something so pure about a fresh falling of snow. I love the way it blankets everything, smoothing out harsh edges, and leaves a shimmer when the light hits it. I'm aware not everyone has a love for snow, but take away the driving and shoveling responsibilities, and there's something exciting even for the coldest of hearts to witness a white Christmas.

A common analogy we hear is "white as snow" but also the comparison between snow and purity. Think of Isaiah 1:18 (ESV):

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:  
though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red like crimson,  
they shall become like wool.

Did you know that the word "snow" appears 24 times in the Bible? It's wild to think that in Israel, the warmest place I've ever been (besides Alabama), they even know what snow is! But look back to Isaiah in 1:18 and notice the comparison between white and snow, but also white and wool. Lambs were the example of sacrifices, specifically ones without spots or blemishes. A sacrifice required a spotless and perfect lamb. We see the title, "Lamb of God" be used for Jesus because He is both the sacrifice who takes away sins and is also perfect, sinless, pure.

John the Baptist announces the presence of Jesus in this way, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, ESV). The coming of the Lamb was what faithful followers eagerly awaited for centuries. We also see Jesus described in the New Testament with analogies of wool and snow. Revelation 1:14 says "the hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow" (ESV).

But Christ is not the only one to get the comparison of snow and wool. We as believers are compared to sheep (c.f. John 10), and look back again to Isaiah 1:18. That's about us. Before Christ works salvation into our hearts, we are dead in our sins, we are drenched in sin. No deeds can save us. I often make the comparison that it's as if we are covered in ink and then asked to clean a dirty house: we're only going to make things worse.

But we're promised that though we're unable to save ourselves, God will forgive us. Our sins they are many, His mercy is more. We have His grace when Jesus Christ took on our infirmities, He squeezed us clean of our sins and took them onto Himself, paying the price for them. He changed us from our filthy rags to pristine clothing. We celebrate Christmas, the coming of the Lamb, because it is God's promise being fulfilled. The first Christmas was a White Christmas because it signaled to us that the perfect Lamb was born and that we can now live as ones who have been cleansed from sin. Every Christmas for us is now a White Christmas because we are no longer covered in crimson, but washed in white.

There are so many who have lived in darkness, whose sins have weighed them down so heavily, they can't even look up. This is the message for the brokenhearted, the weary, the ones who have been led along into the jaws of wolves by hired hands who care nothing for the sheep: Your Redeemer has come and His name is Jesus. Trust in Him. Throw yourselves upon Him and surrender yourself completely to His loving and forgiving arms. Worry no more, hate yourself no more, for you are loved and He will care for you forever.

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

## Official Notice of Call to a Congregational Meeting

The congregation of the Lancaster Presbyterian Church is hereby called to a Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 10th for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons, Trustees and members of the 2024 Nominating Committee. The meeting will take place at 12:15pm in the sanctuary.

## Prayer Gathering - Monday, December 11th

Come and pray silently or aloud, but join with fellow believers in praise, thanksgiving, confession and petition. 1:00pm in the Church Library

## The Genesis Academy (September 10th to December 10th)

5:30m—7:30pm

Sunday, December 10: An accredited CMI speaker will give a presentation demonstrating how the Gospel message is rooted in the book of Genesis and provides evidence to support the reliability of the Bible's record of origins.



## Women's Evening Bible Study - The Gospel of Mark (Part 3)

Meeting Thursday, December 14th at 7:00pm

## Men's Bible Study

A new men's bible study has begun and is led by Ken O'Connor and will continue every month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 10:00am.

**Final Gathering: Monday, December 11th @ 10:00am**

## Sunday School Mitten Tree Collection

It's Mitten Tree Collection time! The LPC Sunday School children are collecting mittens, hats, gloves, and scarves to donate to needy children. Look for the trees to hang your donation on near the entrances. We will be collecting all of December – January 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Shhhh!** Those interested in contributing to a Christmas gift for Pastor Kelly & Pastor Will are asked to place their donation in a separate envelope marked "Special" and place it in the offering or give it to Judy Cavanaugh no later than December 3rd. *Please note: this is a personal gift and will not appear on your donation statement.*



## *Come Worship With Us Sunday Mornings*

*Traditional Service @ 8:30am*

*Contemporary Service @ 11:00am*

*Childcare is provided.*

*LIVESTREAM available on our LPC You Tube channel and Facebook page.*

*Sunday School & Adult Education classes @ 9:45am*

[www.L-P-C.org](http://www.L-P-C.org)

*"Glory to God in the  
highest, And on earth  
peace among men with  
whom He is pleased."  
Luke 2: 14*

## *Christmas Eve Worship Services*

*9:30AM & 8:00PM*

*Childcare provided at the 9:30AM service only.*

*Celebrate the birth of our  
Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ.*

[www.L-P-C.org](http://www.L-P-C.org)

## **2023 Advent Devotional**

**The Advent Devotional Guide is now available.**

**This is a special devotional for you to use at home  
as you prepare to celebrate Christ's birth.**

**This year's devotional has been prepared by Rev. Will McCabe.**

***The First Sunday of Advent is Sunday, December 3, 2023.***

## **Junior & Senior High Youth Group (7th - 12th graders)**

**Meeting on Saturday evenings, 5:30pm—8:00pm**

Gatherings will include cooking & eating dinner together, followed by Bible discussion and games!

**Final Gathering of 2023 will be Saturday, December 2nd**

We will be meeting at 5:30pm for a quick dinner and then baking cookies to donate to Buffalo City Mission, followed by youth group fun! Please let us know if you plan to attend so we know how many cookies to prepare.

***Stay tuned for details for 2024!***

## **Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection Update**

Frank and I would like to thank all of the Shoebox packers of LPC. We had the opportunity of taking **99** Shoeboxes lovingly packed by our LPC congregation for Operation Christmas Child over to Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church on Sunday Nov. 19 in the afternoon. They all looked so beautiful on the outside!! I am sure they are even more beautiful on the inside and will cause such joy as they are opened by a boy or girl somewhere in the world. The best part of all of this is that each child receives the Gospel story in their own language!! Please join me in prayer that each shoebox recipient will have their heart opened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that their entire family and maybe village will as well!! These shoeboxes go to a processing center where each one will be gone through to be sure their contents are acceptable as required by the ministry of Samaritan's Purse and different customs agencies around the world.

If you printed up a label in order to track your shoebox, you can go to [Samaritanspurse.org](http://Samaritanspurse.org) and do the following to find out where your shoebox has gone: What we do(up top), Operation Christmas Child(drop down), Follow your box look up tool and put in your email address. You will be able to see where your shoeboxes have gone since 2014. It is so easy!! Please keep praying for your box or boxes, and start thinking about what you can do next year for Operation Christmas Child!!

I checked to see where our boxes are going. I found out 2 countries where they are headed-The Dominican Republic and South Africa. I can hardly believe ours have shipped already. Now we know where to pray for. Last year ours went to Ukraine. Where are yours headed?? If you know, please send me an email at [pat-tij74@gmail.com](mailto:pat-tij74@gmail.com). Let's see how much of the world our church is reaching through this shoe box ministry!!

If you were unable to pack a shoebox or would like to do more, you are able to pack a shoebox on-line. Please use the following link so our WNY area receives credit for shoeboxes that our area has packed on-line: **[sampur.se/3P9xudS](http://sampur.se/3P9xudS)**. Also, if you wish to make a donation directly to Samaritan's Purse for the shoebox ministry, you may do so at [Samaritan's Purse.org](http://Samaritan'sPurse.org). This is a great way to make a donation to help with the shipping costs, which is \$10 per box, if you feel called to do so. The other cost that Samaritan's Purse has are the Gospel Booklets in each child's language. These cost \$6.00 each and are included in every shoebox that is given to a boy or girl.

Frank & Pat Gerber




# FAMILY NIGHT

at Lancaster Presbyterian Church


## WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 5:30pm-7pm

Join us for any or all of the activities!




5:30pm - 6:15pm

### Pizza and Fellowship

- All are welcome!
  - Location: Waith Hall
  - \$1 per slice
- 


6:00pm-6:30 pm

### Cherub Choir

- 
- Age group: Pre-K 4 – 2nd Grade
  - Location: room 114
  - Singing for fun and to rehearse a song to sing in church or out in the community 1x per month


6:15pm-7:00pm

### Adult Study Group

- 
- Location: Pastor's Study
  - Dropping your kid(s) off for Cherub Choir & Mini Youth Group? Join Pastor Kelly for a time of discussion on applying the Gospel to parenting
  - All adults welcome!
  - Childcare available in the nursery


6:30pm-7:00pm

### Mini Youth Group

- 
- Age group: Pre-K 4 – 2nd grade
  - Location: room 114
  - Activities, games, coloring, and stories

Also on Wednesday nights,

### Kids Youth Group

- 
- 6:30pm-8:00 pm
  - Age group: 3rd-6th Grades
  - Location: Potter's House
  - Games in the gym, Bible study, crafts & activities, plus a snack!





# Prayer Page

**Pray for the pastors:** Dear Lord, Even though our pastors serve our church with what seems like boundless energy, no one is a superhuman; I know the pastors get really weary. The demands on the body and spirit are nearly unending. Would You let our pastors find respite and relaxation from the day? Would You clear the mind, give a good sleep tonight, and refreshment for another day of kingdom service? Bless our pastors, oh Lord, for faithfulness and offer blessings with a new day to continue in faithfully service to You.

<https://www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/7-verses-and-7-prayers-for-your-pastor/>

## **Praying for LPC ministries:**

**Session:** The KAP prayer is to be a prayer asking the Lord's blessing upon and His help with the work of Session. Session this month wishes to offer the following KAP prayer requests:

Please pray for God's direction, wisdom and help for the Worship Music Search Committee as they seek to find a person or persons to help direct and or help provide worshipful music during our Worship services.

Please pray for the person or persons that God has selected to help with the Worship music at LPC.

Please pray for the LPC congregation that we may understand and accept changes in Worship, music, technology, furniture, schedules or whatever other changes God may have planned for LPC.

**Deacons:** Dear Lord, search us, God, and know our hearts, test us and know our anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in us like Judah and lead us in your way everlasting. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Prayer for our country:** As the world prepares to celebrate the birth of Your Son on earth, O God, remind us here in this nation, of our roots in people who came here to be able to worship You in freedom. They were imperfect sinners, as are we, but You, our great God, are perfect and unchanging. Help us to recognize the subtleties of Satan's schemes to undermine the truth of Your word, which tells us of Your saving grace. Open the eyes of many to believe, and to praise Your holiness. May Your name be glorified on earth as it is in heaven.

**Prayer for our World:** Heavenly Father, help us to remember that wherever Your Church is, that is where members of Your family are, and Your family is our family if we belong to Christ. Teach us to pray for our suffering brothers and sisters, to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice, as one family. Lord, we pray that You will open the eyes of many who hate and kill Your people because Satan has blinded them to the truth. Give Your Church around the world joy at this season of Christmas and protect them from those who plot evil against them.

## **Praying for our family**

Barb Benzinger  
Rob Herget  
Maureen O'Connor  
Christian Carlsen  
Carolina Jackson  
Sandy Wiefert  
Sharon Krause  
Rudy Bucci  
Jim McElhinny  
Judy Cavanaugh  
Beth Kroecker  
Ron Stasiowski  
Judy Martin  
Don Flaig  
Don Metzger  
Donna Herget  
Jackie Harbold  
Betty Glowacki  
Millie Epolito  
Judy Kish  
Norma English  
Nancy Patterson  
Bob Foley

## **LPC's Military Personnel:**

Thomas Carlsen II  
Laurel Foss  
Dan Pulley  
David Boncore

## **LPC Prayer Ministry:**

If you have a prayer request or would like to be part of the prayer email list please contact the church office by email ([office@l-p-c.org](mailto:office@l-p-c.org)) or call Marie in the church office at 684-2277.



## Lancaster Presbyterian Church

5461 Broadway St. Lancaster, NY 14086  
Phone: 716.684.2277 Fax: 716.684.2446

Rev. Dr. Kelly Negus, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Will McCabe, Associate Pastor

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US POSTAGE PAID  
Lancaster, NY 14086  
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[www.L-P-C.org](http://www.L-P-C.org)  
[office@L-P-C.org](mailto:office@L-P-C.org)

### **Purpose:**

**For God's glory**  
we are committed  
to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ  
in all we say and all we do  
to make and equip disciples  
in our families, our community, and the world.

### **Core Values:**

We believe in the authority of Scripture  
and we affirm  
the historic teachings  
of Reformed Christianity.

**Address Service Requested**

# Christmas Eve Worship Services

**9:30AM & 8:00PM**

*Celebrate the birth of our  
Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ.*

[www.L-P-C.org](http://www.L-P-C.org)

