

*The
Grapevine*

December 2022



*Celebrate the birth of
Christ together!
Sunday School
Christmas Program*



*Saturday, December 10th @ 5:00pm
followed by a FREE dinner for everyone*

Come Celebrate Christ's Birth with our LPC Family!
Saturday, December 10th
5:00pm - Sunday School Program

Celebrate the birth of Jesus together as our Sunday School children perform a short play titled "WOW!" – a short Christmas play telling the story of Jesus' birth! This Christmas Program is just what you are looking for to make this season special! Immediately following the program, we will have a meal in Waith Fellowship Hall.

5:30pm - Dinner in Waith Fellowship Hall

Donations to cover food costs accepted at the meal

Pasta (gluten-free, lactose-free & meat-free options available), fresh bread, salad

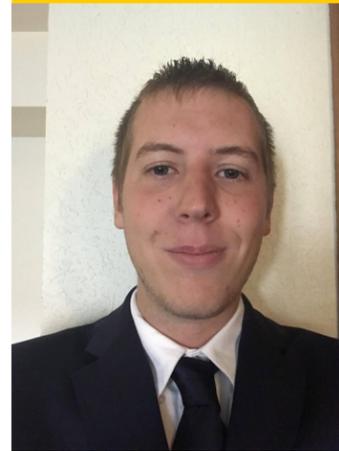
Please bring a plate of cookies, if you are able

Register your attendance on the sign-up sheet in the foyer, or call the church office

Ways to help with the dinner

Sign up in the foyer or with Becky Young to help in the kitchen

Dec 9th @ 6:30pm or Dec 10 (if needed)



The Everlasting Gift

Admit it or not, one of the first things on our minds when we think of Christmas from our childhood is the gifts we got. We can remember our favorite gifts vividly: a stuffed animal we eyed at the store front, the hot wheels set we saw on TV, or maybe a new Lego set we found in those toy catalogues. These lit up our eyes on Christmas morning with an ear

-to-ear grin. In the moment, we think the excitement will always be with us.

But these gifts we receive don't last. Sometimes they break, we lose them (which is sometimes another word for our parents taking it to a garage sale without telling us), we give them away to siblings, cousins, or our kids, or when they aren't as fun anymore because we've grown out of the toys or they just lost their appeal, we throw them out.

It reminds me of a famous poem from one of my favorite poets: Robert Frost. Robert Frost is known for "Fire and Ice" and "The Road Not Taken," but the poem I'm thinking of is "Nothing Gold can Stay." The point of the poem, as the title suggests, is that as beautiful as something may seem, it won't remain. A shiny car will eventually rust. A state-of-the-art phone or gaming console will eventually become obsolete. The brand-new book will eventually wear down and fall apart. Nothing gold can stay.

Not exactly a cheery message so far, although I also know that many can see the point of all this a mile away. But here's the thing: if we can so easily predict the point of all this and we know we've heard this message a hundred times before, why do we constantly find ourselves distracted by things which are temporary? Why do we build our houses out of sand when we know the tide always comes?

There's certainly nothing wrong in receiving toys or tools or gadgets for Christmas, and nothing wrong with wanting them, either. The problem is when we think that the momentary happiness we get from them can stay. We're trying to grab hold of smoke. In Ecclesiastes we get a similar message. Some see this Book of the Bible as the "Debbie Downer" book because as the common phrase goes: "all is vanity and a striving after wind" (1:11, ESV) or "I have found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind" (2:11, HCSB). This is the common motif throughout the book.

However, the point of the book is not to turn us into angsty teenagers (again), but to demonstrate that we

will find no satisfaction in wisdom itself or money or fame. None of these things on earth will fully satisfy. This is not to say we cannot enjoy these things at all. Instead, we are to enjoy the things of this world for what they are: temporary in the backdrop of what (or rather, who) is eternal. To make it more abundantly obvious, we read this in Ecclesiastes 3:14: "I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him."

This is where we get to the part that might sound more Christmas-themed. It's the memory of the temporary that should remind us of what is eternal: God's promises. We can withstand death and decay because we know God's promise to His people is sure: We will surely be in Paradise with Him who rescued us (Luke 23:43, John 14:1-4). We know with certainty that although knowledge and prophecies and tongues will pass away, "love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:8). We see this promise realized with the birth of Jesus.

Jesus' sacrifice to forgive our sins is eternal. You cannot rack up too many sins to make it void. You cannot use God's grace to the point of it falling apart. It is never obsolete. His love for you is never out-of-date and needing an update.

I want you to remember this Christmas the full assurance of this gift that will always be with us, and to read with overflowed love and joy Hebrews 10:19-23 (bold mine):

Therefore, brothers, since we have **confidence** to enter the holy places by the **blood of Jesus**, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us draw near** with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, with our hearts **sprinkled clean** from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our **hope without wavering**, for **he who promised is faithful**.

While many gifts are meant for just you (unless, like me, you were in a family where you had to share gifts with your siblings), this is a gift to be shared over and over to as many people as possible. Share this passage with at least one other person. You don't have to share it to a complete stranger or an ardent atheist; you could even share it to someone who claims to already have the gift of salvation, for even we Christians need the reminder that this is not a present that will rust away, lose its luster, or be sold at a garage sale. The hope of our salvation is sure, and the gift of everlasting life, the love of Christ, is here to stay.

Merry Christmas!

Official Notice of Call to a Congregational Meeting

The congregation of the Lancaster Presbyterian Church is hereby called to a Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 11th for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons, Trustees and members of the 2023 Nominating Committee. The meeting will take place at 12:15pm in the sanctuary.

Memory Lane - Bethlehem

Around 700 BC the prophet Micah wrote, "But as for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel." A tiny insignificant village has been remembered through the centuries as the birthplace of the royal One who came to earth to redeem His people. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" we sing at Christmas time.

It is believed that the first nativity scene was set up by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. Within a few centuries it was common to have not only nativity scenes but dramatic enactments of that wondrous night in the little town of Bethlehem. Matthew and Luke don't give us many details, but we know that God in His sovereignty ordained that Mary and Joseph would travel to Bethlehem from Nazareth to register for the Roman census in order to fulfill Micah's prophesy. While they were there, the virgin Mary gave birth to the promised Savior, Jesus. She laid the Baby in a manger because there was no room at the inn. We know angels announced the birth to shepherds, who came to worship the Baby, and later wise men also visited, probably after Mary and Joseph had moved to more suitable housing. Year after year for more than a thousand years, homes and churches, and until recently, even public schools, have reenacted the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

The earliest mention of a Christmas nativity drama in LPC archives appears in 1937, but there is good reason to think that there may have been such enactments before that. Some of you may recognize the names of a few of the participants in 1937—Jane Smith Kuntz, Vera Loesch Necci, David Ahlstrom (husband of Doris), Wade Elmer Sharp (June 2022 Grapevine).

The photo below was taken in the early 1970s. Sandy Havens is at the organ and Rev. Richard Rettew is in the doorway on the left. If you recognize anyone else in this photo and can give us a better date, please speak to Gloria Chaves or Jane Schafer. (Notice the many changes that have been made to our sanctuary since then.)

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!



Youth Groups @ LPC!

Kids Youth Group (3rd—6th graders)

Meeting weekly on Wednesdays (6:30-8:00pm) @ the Potter's House

Gym time, crafts, activities, snacks & Bible lesson

No Youth Group Wednesday, December 28th

Junior & Senior High Youth Group (7th—12th graders)

Meeting weekly on Sundays (7:00pm—8:30pm) at the Potter's House

- Sunday, December 4th: **Senior High only (9th—12th grade) Supper @ 5:00pm** (*see below for details*); Regular youth group for 7th –12th graders at the Potter's House, 7:00pm—8:30pm
- Sunday, December 11th: **Bonfire at the Dunbar home (weather permitting)**
 - Drop off and pick up at the Dunbar's, 7:00pm—8:30pm
 - *If inclement weather, youth group will be at the Potter's House.*
- Sunday, December 18th: **Christmas Party** (details to follow)
- Sunday, December 25th: **No Youth Group**
- Sunday, January 1st: **No Youth Group**

January 6th—8th: SAVE THE DATES! Possible retreat, details to follow!

Senior High Cooking Class & Dinner!

For High School Students and DAB Young Adults

1st Sunday of each month in the church kitchen

On Sunday, December 4th, DAB college kids and Sr. Highs are invited to enjoy dinner together at church - but first there will be a cooking lesson as they prepare the meal together!

Arrive at 5:00p.m. - Dinner at 6:30 p.m. - Youth Group at 7 p.m. (Jr High joins)

High School and DAB should RSVP to Diane Carlsen or Becky Young meal planning purposes.



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

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



***Christmas Eve
Candlelight Services***

5:00pm & 8:00pm
Childcare provided at the 5:00pm service only.

***Christmas Day
Worship***

10:30am
Childcare provided.

www.L-P-C.org

No Sunday School & no Adult Education on Christmas Day.

New Year's Day Worship - Sunday, January 1, 2023

One worship service @ 10:30am (Childcare provided.)

No Sunday School & no Adult Education

*Communion will take place on Sunday, January 8, 2023
during both services.*

Adult Education Class 2022

The Sunday School class will include a trilogy of topics. The term begins with a study of the Epistles of John and ends with a dive into some of the Parables of Jesus. At intervals through the Fall, there will be a focus on sharing our faith as a natural part of our everyday lives.

- The latter half of the Fall Sunday School class will include a video series on the Parables of Jesus by R.C. Sproul (November 13 – December 18). This will be facilitated by the Adult Education Committee with discussions before and after the 20-minute videos. We will seek a greater understanding and affection for the significant and timeless message Jesus proclaimed. Several parables will be studied including the Parable of The Prodigal Son, Parable of The Rich Fool, The Owner of the Vineyard, and others.
- Evangelism will be a key focus during the Fall Sunday school term facilitated by Sharon Miller and the Evangelism Committee. The last Sunday School class of each month will cover this important topic of sharing “the faith we live”. The video series by Becky Pippert will be a focus of the program as she discusses what is “relational evangelism” and how to incorporate our love for people in our witness for Jesus.

Church Library Update

Christmas books available for your reading pleasure! Please check out the book return cart in your LPC library for children’s books, adult fiction and non fiction Christmas books.

SHHHH!

Those interested in contributing to a Christmas gift for our pastors Will and Kelly are asked to place their donation in a separate envelope marked “special” and place it in the offering or give to Judy Cavanaugh no later than December 4th. *Please note: This is a personal gift and will not appear on your donation statement.*

Men’s Bible Study

Men’s Bible Study will meet weekly on Monday evenings at 7pm in Waith Hall. This year we will be following Pastor Kelly’s sermon series, beginning with the current series on Galatians. We’ll review the previous weeks passage and look into the verses that will be discussed at next Sunday’s service. We hope that this study format will prepare our hearts for worship each week, as we seek to gain a deeper knowledge of God’s word.

Thursday Evening Women’s Bible Study

**Course Title: The Gospel of Mark (Part 1)
The Arrival of Jesus**

“People hold all sorts of opinions about Jesus Christ – what he believed, what he taught, how he lived. They also have thoughts on how He died and whether or not He really rose from the dead. But when you set your opinions aside, what do you really know about Jesus?” Kay Arthur “Who do you say that I am?” It’s the question Jesus posed to Peter and it is the question he asks of us. All other questions of our day hinge on getting this answer right. This study of the gospel of Mark is designed to allow Jesus to speak for himself, through his Word, and by his authority, to show us who he is, what he came for and how he provided us an opportunity to know him intimately. *Bring a friend!*

December Gatherings: Dec. 1st & Dec. 15th

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Teachers: Laurie Muscato and Cheryl Olszewski

Prayer Gathering

A person who came to the prayer meeting for the first time said she felt at home and at ease there. I hope many of you who are able to come on the second Monday of the month at 1:00 will also come and find that this is a place to rest in the Lord whether you pray out loud or not. It is an hour to slow down and spend time silently joining in the prayers of others or speaking your own. King David said even before there is a word on our tongue, God knows it all. So why then do we need to pray? Because our God is a gracious God and He wants to hear from us. There is something very special about praying with Christian friends. Please join us on December 12 at 1:00pm.



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 committees' work. Session this month wishes to offer the following two KAP prayer requests upon LPC's programs:

Session asks for prayer for a successful Missions Conference at LPC.

- Pray for all the LPC Missionaries.
- Pray for all the attendees.
- Pray that hearts may be open to supporting missions on a one-on-one basis.
- Pray the hearts may be open to doing missions.
- Pray that hearts will be open and willing when we each have that opportunity to share the Gospel with those the Lord places before us.

Deacons: Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus and Holy Spirit, thank you for the many blessings you pour over us and for the opportunity to serve and lead others to your saving grace. We pray that you continue to guide us and give us strength to seize the opportunity to lead by example; to live lives of holiness and spread your good news to all in our path. We know we are not perfect and are daily sinners, may we be willing to share that knowledge with others and show them how there is a way to repent and follow you. Thank you Jesus for your love and ultimate example. We need you and love you and want all people to know you as Savior. In Jesus name, Amen

Prayer for our country: Thank you, Lord, for a nation where we have freedom to vote and to speak openly. Forgive us for not using those gifts to stand faithfully for truth and righteousness. Open the eyes and hearts of Your people to the need to resist when we hear words and see acts that do not align with Your truth. Give Your church courage to fight the good fight against evil and to fear nothing but God. Thank you for those who boldly say, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."

Prayer for our World: Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan. Father, these names are strange to us, but not to You. You know exactly where these places are and you know the names of those who live there whom you've called to be Your faithful witnesses. Please encourage Your church in Central Asia. Deliver them from the attacks of Communism, Islam and all of the other lies which surround them. Give pastors courage to stand boldly when they are assailed by those who've been deceived by the great deceiver. Help Christians to be able to forgive their persecutors.

Praying for our family

Judy Martin
Don Flaig
Beth Kroecker
Al LaVenture

Home Members

Donna Herget
Jackie Harbold
Judy Kish
Don Metzger

LPC's Military Personnel:

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) 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

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.

Non-Profit
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www.L-P-C.org
office@L-P-C.org

Address Service Requested

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