

THE NEWSLETTER

October 2014

FROM THE PASTOR

At our last session meeting, our elders voted to become a supporting congregation of Presbyterian Welcome, an organization that works for the full participation of people in faith communities, regardless of sexual orientation, or gender identity. We have always stated our welcome in our Mission Statement. But now we are taking this additional step. Why now?

Our society is more and more open and affirming of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people, and more and more people are "coming out" at younger and younger ages. But people of faith are still divided on the subject. And many are preaching a message of judgment and hate. As a result, religious parents are much more likely to disown children who "come out" to them as gay, and kick them out of their home.* What kind of message does this give these children about God? If they can still believe in God, many of them believe God hates them.

This week I read an article that tells the story of a young woman who called her parents from college to tell them she was gay.* Her mother, who is a good Christian and raised her daughter in a religious home responded, "I don't know what we could have done for God to have given us a fag as a child," and then hung up the phone. Later the girl's brother called and said, "Mom and Dad don't want to talk to you, but I'm supposed to tell you what's going to happen." He then proceeded to tell her that her parents didn't want her coming to the house or contacting them in any way. They would no longer pay her tuition, or any other expenses. They were cutting off her credit cards and her phone, and if she didn't return her car to a specific location, they would report the car as stolen. Boom. No more family. This young woman managed to get through college, but she was homeless for part of the time, and often hungry. And she said she thought her suffering was punishment for being gay, and that she deserved it.



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CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: MON., WED., FRI.
9 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. & 1-2:30 P.M.

In another story from the same article, a nine year old boy asked his Christian mother what the word "gay" meant. His mother explained what it was, and then told him it was an abomination. The boy didn't tell his parents that he realized he was gay. Instead he cried, and prayed for God to make him normal. And his thoughts went like this: "If it's this bad for me to be this way, why did God make me? I wish I were dead."

In Presbyterian Welcome, we hope to make the

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HEADLINERS

JAZZ JAM SESSION—OCTOBER 10—7:30 p.m. in the Social Hall Information on page 4

CHURCH FAMILY POTLUCK AND DINNER DANCE see page 2

USHER, OFFERING COUNTERS & NURSERY CARE SCHEDULES see last page

CAN YOU HELP AT THE HOLIDAY FAIR? Information on page 2

PLEDGE SUNDAY COMING IN NOVEMBER!

From the Pastor (Continued)

the message more clear, that God loves everyone. God made all different kinds of people and that's a good thing. We need all different kinds of people to reflect God's glory. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, we all are growing and learning, and we are called to support each other and help each other, not to change our basic identity, but to use our unique gifts and perspective to glorify God. We look forward to working with Presbyterian Welcome to spread the word of God's love to all people.

Peace and Blessings,

Debra Given

*Alex Morris, "The Forsaken: A Rising Number of Homeless Gay Teens Are Being Cast Out By Religious Families," September 12, 2014 at www.time.com/3329396/gay-teens-rolling-stone.

**CHURCH FAMILY POTLUCK
AND DINNER DANCE**



Saturday, October 25, 5 p.m., please join us for our **POTLUCK** dinner dance. This year the suggested donation will be \$5 (to cover cost of musicians and supplies), plus your favorite dish. We will enjoy music from the jazz band and also have a DJ. Bring your dancing shoes.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Jenni at 201-927-0282 or cjenni31@aol.com A sign-up sheet will be posted.

Happy Birthday

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| October 2 | Pete Shanno |
| October 9 | John Koepl |
| October 11 | Jae Lee |
| October 27 | Francis Callahan
Stephanie Laboy |

COME, LET US WORSHIP GOD. . . .

Saturday, October 4, 4 p.m.
Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 5 11:00 a.m.
World Communion Sunday at the Teaneck Presbyterian Church, 1 Church St., Rev. Timothy Son will preach.
Fellowship hour to follow.

Sunday, October 12 10:30 a.m.
Service for the Lord's Day, the Rev. Ray Jones, PCUSA Evangelism Coordinator
After Worship—Beginners Bible Study
3-5 p.m. Japanese Ministry Worship

Sunday, October 19 10:30 a.m.
Service for the Lord's Day "Peace Emphasis"

Sunday, October 26 10:30 a.m.
Reformation Sunday—Service for the Lord's Day



HOLIDAY FAIR

We need crafters, people to sell at tables, cooks, setup and cleanup crews, lunch wait staff, etc. If you can help in any way, please let Karen Peters know (201-592-8413) Jkkmk142@aol.com). We want to make sure that everyone is involved in this major fundraiser for our church, plus we have fun! Plan to be there on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22.**



FEED THE HUNGRY— We receive food donations every **Sunday** and distribute them to either the **Center for Food Action** or **Loaves and Fishes**. The following frequently used staples are needed for Loaves and Fishes. Please place them in the basket in the front of the sanctuary:

Tomato soup, beef or chicken broth (preferably low sodium), canned vegetables (peas, cut string beans, corn, carrots) canned sliced fruits, apple sauce, beef gravy, pasta: orzo, elbow, rotini), When shopping, remember to pick up extras and bring

them with you on Sunday. Thank you.

THE GUERRERO-HARRIS FAMILY CONCERT

Friday, October 3 at 8 p.m., former pro-football player turned major international opera star Lawrence Harris in concert. Alongside him is wife and concert pianist, Renée Guerrero, Music Director for Leonia Presbyterian Church, and their teenage children Sydney and Quintin in a unique musical affair for the entire family featuring songs and duets from the Broadway shows *The Sound of Music*, *Les Miserables*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, as well as songs by the Italian composer Francesco Paolo Tosti & Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. *Admission: \$15 at the door*

Saturday, October 18, 2014, the Community of Friends in Action is sponsoring “**La Fiesta**,” a fund-raiser to support the group’s work on behalf of the Hispanic workers in our communities. Featuring the Still Standing Band, it will be held at the American Legion Hall, 399 Broad Ave, in Leonia, at 8 to 11 p.m. Guatemalan crafts will be on sale. For more information call 201-833-1737 or go to www.communityoffriendsinaction.org.

WORDS FROM AFAR:

I hope my e-mail finds you well. It has already been four months since we left US. Everything goes so quickly and in a very positive way, thanks to God. Last week was back to school week for Iaro. He was so excited to make new friends and was not disappointed. He was very happy that all the boys in his class like him. No more complaining about not having friends at school! He also found new friends in the neighborhood. He just makes a signal and the kids come out to play. Iaro likes the school even if he said that he is not familiar with Christian school i.e they have a little prayer before and after the class and then they have to read and discuss the Bible. He is very proud to use the Bible from Leonia Church. It is a very small school with only 200 students and only 15 in Iaro's class. He is the youngest, but the tallest. Rija, he is already working and very enthusiastic. There are also some of his friends in the neighborhood coming back home after several years in France. It is nice to find each other after so long. For me, it is my turn to stay home. I will resume work at the end of October. So I just deal with the boxes and settling down slowly.

We are very happy to receive all the news from church. Thank you for keeping us on the mailing list. Blessings for all of you and a big hug from the three of us. Lanto Rahajarizafy

JAZZ JAM SESSION—Bring an instrument and play with the pros. Don't worry, any level of player is welcome! If you don't know Jazz, or you don't have plans on **Friday, October 10, 8-10 p.m. you are welcome.** Doors open at the Presbyterian Church in Leonia, 181 Fort Lee Road, at 7:30 p.m. This time, we will meet in the Social Hall. Can't make it this month, don't worry, the next session is November 8 and we will continue on the second Friday each month.

SEPTEMBER 9, SESSION MINUTES

The meeting opened with prayer at 7:30 p.m. The Rev. Jun Yoshimatsu of the Special Ministry for the Japanese attended. Members spoke with Rev. Yoshimatsu about the status of SMJ since its former director, Rev. Takako Suzuki Terino, moved to New Mexico. The group would like to start weekly services on Sunday afternoons in our sanctuary, once they find a new leader/pastor for the worship services. SMJ offers the only mainline Protestant worship for the Japanese in North Jersey. The Rev. Yoshimatso then left and the meeting continued. Members discussed the SMJ proposal, with several saying the relationship has worked well, has met the needs of Japanese worshipers, and has served as a mission for us. Session VOTED and APPROVED authorizing a proposal to allow the Special Ministry for the Japanese to worship in our sanctuary every Sunday afternoon. On those Sundays when such worship would conflict with our activities by our church, SMJ will meet elsewhere in the building.

Elder J. Peters reported for the Property Committee that they will meet with the architect to discuss bathroom and kitchen renovations and will paint the Fireplace Room. Elder Topousis said the Green-faith Proposal is proceeding. They will also order a Walker Display System for hanging artwork in the fireplace room. Session VOTED and APPROVED ordering materials and hiring a contractor to install the Walker Display System, which will come from the Pamela Lovell bequest of \$5000.

The Rev. Given reported that the Church Secretary, Michele Ring is now working Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Elder Wilson reported for Worship that the Harriette Coleman funeral drew 150 people. Session VOTED and APPROVED authorizing communion for Sept., Oct., Nov. & Dec. and at the wedding of Jonathan and Virginia Cora. The Prayer meeting will continue every Wednesday night at 8 p.m. Elder Ito reported that registration for ESL classes will be held 9/18 & 23 and classes will begin the week of Sept. 29. The Lunar New Year service will be Feb. 22 and will feature Japanese drums. Elder Broffman reported for the Bingham & Stenken Scholarship Funds that Molly Callahan received a \$500 scholarship. She attends Marymount College. Elder Voreacos reported for the Budget Committee that pledges are lagging the budgeted amount by \$10,808. Elder Phillips reported for the Christian Education Committee that 11 students registered for Sunday school. Joe VanDeWeert prepared a wonderful Sunday School activity based on the books of the Bible and you can see it hanging in the Entry Room. Sabrina Donalies agreed to work in the nursery and Hannah Chen and Mialy Rakotoselson will oversee elementary school children during the service. Elder K. Peters reported for Fellowship that planning for the Holiday Fair has begun. Elder Shanno reported for Mission & Stewardship that the Peacemaking offering will be received on Oct. 5, and 25% will be donated to a local cause. Clerk Voreacos reported that Marisol Seri Hwang, daughter of Eric Hwang and Angie Chung was baptized on June 29. Session VOTED and APPROVED Rev. Given's request for vacation November 12-18. The next meeting is Oct. 14. Session VOTED AND APPROVED becoming a supporting congregation for Presbyterian Welcome. David Voreacos, Clerk



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USHERS FOR THE MONTH

October 12	Barbara & Michael Sofia and Roberta Toolen
October 19	Linda McGarry, Jack Peters & Tom Topousis
October 26	Jeff Im, Elin Park & Anne Stebbins

OFFERING COUNTERS

October 5	Olivia Taylor & David Voreacos
October 12	Hyung Kune Shim & Jonathan Phillips
October 19	Ginny Brown & Olivia Taylor
October 26	Hyung Kune Shim & Pete Shanno

NURSERY CARE

October 12	Vicky Li
October 19	Sarah Han
October 26	Yukiko Aoki