

THE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2014

FROM THE PASTOR

This is the season of Advent, a time of hope. But this year our hope is tempered by the reality of what is happening in our country. More than ever we are aware of the racial issues that divide us and periodically break out into violence.

White middle-class people are often unaware of the daily conditions of life for people of color. One of our former pastors in Paterson, David Thornton, told the Presbytery how he had to be careful when he went out running. He wasn't afraid of hoodlums or robbers. As a black man, he was afraid someone would think he was running from a crime and shoot him. So he had to watch what he wore and where he ran. This is a daily reality for people of color. The fact is, young black men are shot dead by police at 21 times the rate of young white men. And when someone is mistakenly killed by a white person in authority, anger rises to the surface, no matter what the circumstances.

How are Christians to respond? In his letter to the Romans (12:15) Paul tells us to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Our job is not to tell people how they should feel. We are called to listen and learn, to try to understand when people are angry and upset. When someone expresses anger at injustice, the worst thing we can do is to belittle it, or write it off as unimportant. We don't have to accept violence, but we need to take the feelings behind it seriously.*

As we enter into the time of Advent, we are called to be awake, to see and feel what is happening in the world, and tune our lives to the one who is coming.

The prophet Isaiah prayed, saying, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down (O God), so that the mountains would quake ... (and) the nations would tremble at your presence..." (ch. 64:1) This is a passionate prayer for things to be right in the world.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LEONIA
181 FORT LEE ROAD, P.O. Box 448
LEONIA, NJ 07605
TEL. 201 944-1358
WEBSITE WWW.PRESBYLEONIA.ORG

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

The people cried to God, come and help us!
And they confessed their sins to God saying,
"We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our ...deeds are like filthy cloth..."

There's no complacency in this prayer, no self-satisfaction, but rather self-criticism and reflection, a longing for justice, for the end of suffering, and the advent of God's truth,

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HEADLINERS

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE PRACTICE, information on Page 2

CAROL SING & POT LUCK, see article on Page 3

PLEDGE UPDATE, more information on Page 4

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST ENCLOSED

From the Pastor (continued)

mercy and love. This prayer rises from a deep place, a recognition of the need for God in a world of enemies, hatred and sin. And a recognition that all people belong to God.

Advent is a time to take stock of our lives, to wake up to what is happening in the world, to confess our corporate and individual prejudices, problems and sins, and how our world has fallen short of God's intention for it. In Advent we are aware that all is not right with the world. There is injustice and violence, and real reasons to be upset. And so we pray for God to tear open the heavens and come down. And we do what we can to prepare for the coming of God's reign on earth as it is in heaven.

God's blessings be with you all this Christmas,

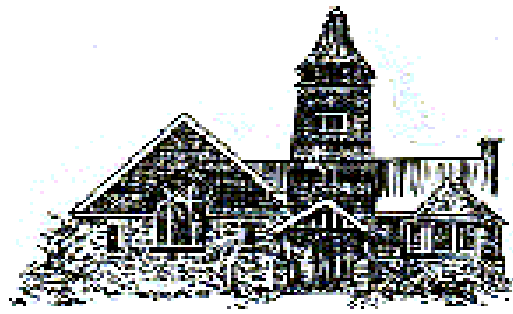
Debra Given

* credit to Evans, Rachel Held, "Not As Helpless As We Think: 3 Ways to Stand In Solidarity With Ferguson," at God's Politics Blog, <http://Sojo.net>, August 14, 2014.

Happy Birthday

Dec. 10	Kristen Richter
Dec. 12	Katie Lynne Muller
	Hyung Kune Shim
Dec. 24	Aiden Woojin Han
Dec. 27	Debra Given
	Brian Jonson
	Max Voreacos
Dec. 29	David Voreacos

PLEASE JOIN THE CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENTS, PARENTS & TEACHERS ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 AT 2 P.M. TO SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS AT INGLEMOOR NURSING HOME
We will meet in the entry room at 2 p.m.



COME, LET US WORSHIP GOD. . .

- 12/7 Second Sunday in Advent - 10:30 a.m.**
Service for the Lord's Day and reception of new members
- 12/14 Third Sunday in Advent - 10:30 a.m.**
Service for the Lord's Day will include a celebration of the Lord's Supper
- 12/21 Fourth Sunday in Advent - 10:30 a.m.**
Service for the Lord's Day will include the Christmas Pageant, reception of tagged gifts for the Oelhaf House Shelter and Christmas Gift List Offerings.
- 12/24 Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.** Service of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight.
After Worship: Fellowship Hour
- 12/25 Thursday, 10:30 a.m. Christmas Day**
Joyful Christmas worship with communion
- 12/28 10:30 a.m.** Service for the Lord's Day and Carol Sing (No Church School Classes)

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

REHEARSALS for the **Children's Christmas Service** will take place at **9:30 a.m.** on **Sundays December 7 & 14** with a final run through on **Sunday December 21** before worship. It is **IMPORTANT** that parents and children make every effort to participate.

Ushers for the Month

- Dec. 7 Linda McGarry, Jack Peters & Tom Topousis
- Dec. 14 Jeff Im, Elin Park & Anne Stebbins
- Dec. 21 Christine Banas, Rae Giannuzzi & Kristen Richter
- Dec. 24 Barbara & Michael Sofia
- Dec. 25 Pete & Susan Shanno
- Dec. 28 Hwan Hee Kang & Ammal Varky

Monthly Schedule for Offering Counters

- Dec. 7 Jonathan Phillips & David Voreacos
- Dec. 14 Hyung Kune Shim & Fumio Ito
- Dec. 21 Ginny Brown & Olivia Taylor
- Dec. 24 Ginny Brown
- Dec. 25
- Dec. 28 Fumio Ito & Pete Shanno

Nursery Volunteers

- Dec. 7 Yukiko Aoki
- Dec. 13 Lisa or Joe VanDeWeert
- Dec. 21 Linda McGarry
- Dec. 28` Kristen Richter

CAROL SING

The Presbyterian Church is sponsoring a **Pot Luck Lunch and Carol Sing on Sunday, December 14** directly after worship. We will all join singing beloved Christmas carols and Christmas favorites. Music scores will be provided for the carols. All are warmly welcome.

DECORATE THE SANCTUARY



Please join us on **Sunday, December 7** immediately following worship and our farewell coffee hour for DA Droser, to help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. Each year we decorate the trees, hang the bows and wreaths and add a festive touch to our sanctuary. There are plenty of jobs for everyone. We hope you can stay and join us.

THE CENTER FOR FOOD ACTION NEEDS YOUR HELP



The Center for Food Action needs your help this year more than ever, with Christmas items as follows:

Frozen turkeys, canned white potatoes & yams, boxed mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, pasta and pasta sauce, rice, pancake mix, syrup, 100% juice, canned fruit, cake mix and icing, coffee and tea, supermarket gift cards to purchase turkeys.

CFA always needs the following: canned meats and tuna, canned soups, canned vegetables, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter & jelly, cereal, dry milk and Parmalat, beans, rice, complete meals in a box, baby formula & diapers, ensure, and Supermarket Gift Cards, which allow people to purchase eggs, cheese and fresh products throughout the year.

The food we collect in the baskets also goes to Loaves and Fishes, a “soup kitchen” run by members of our church and other churches in our cluster. Loaves & Fishes needs canned vegetables, pasta, pasta sauce, canned potatoes, canned fruit. When shopping, remember to pick up extras and bring them with you on Sunday. Thank you.

WE GIVE TO OTHERS

At Christmas, we celebrate a great gift to us, and one of our responses is giving gifts to others. We have three distinct opportunities for such giving through our congregation:

- ♦ The annual Alternative Christmas Gift List is enclosed on blue paper. With it, you can support one or more particular ministries.
- ♦ Gift Tags describing the gift requests from the women and children sheltered in the Oelhaf House will be available at the church on Sundays December 7th and 14th. You may purchase one of the indicated gifts and offer it — wrapped for Christmas—during worship on the 21st.
- ♦ You may also make a money offering using the one in your box of weekly envelopes. These gifts will be divided equally between the Englewood Hospital Chaplaincy and the General Assembly Christmas offering. The General Assembly Christmas offering helps support Presbyterian minority schools and nursing home assistance for retired pastors and other church workers.

As you have been blessed, share with others.



Pledge Update

Thank you to all of you who have been so generous with your pledges thus far. It has indeed been a time of fearless giving! We have received 43 pledges totaling \$134,759 through November 24th. We are especially pleased to receive 7 new pledges, a reason to rejoice! If you have not yet sent in your pledge you may contact the church office and speak with Michele at [201-944-1358](tel:201-944-1358) or you may speak to Susan Shanno at [201-944-4603](tel:201-944-4603). (Susan does not have access to the amount that you actually pay.) Pledge forms are also available on line and in the rear of the sanctuary. God has blessed our congregation with many cheerful givers!

DO YOU NEED HELP AT HOME?

Do you need a helping hand at home, in the yard, a cleaning job on a regular basis? Delio Castellanos, our custodian, is looking for additional work. Give him a call at 862-888-8687. He may be able to help you.

FAMILY PROMISE

Once again, we are sheltering the Family Promise group at First Presbyterian Church in Englewood during Christmas week. We will need volunteers to cook and be overnights during the week of Christmas. Please contact Linda McGarry (201-945-7667) with the date of service and what time and talent you wish to donate. Thank you.

WEST BERGEN HONORS CHAIRMAN

West Bergen Mental Healthcare honored Philip Wilson at its 22nd Annual Fall Night of Fine Dining at the Terrace in Paramus on November 10. Philip is leaving the West Bergen chairman position after 35 years of service with the agency.

LORD, OPEN UNTO ME

Howard Thurman

(1900-1981)

Open unto me—light for my darkness.
Open unto me—courage for my fear.
Open unto me—hope for my despair.
Open unto me—peace for my turmoil.
Open unto me—joy for my sorrow.
Open unto me—strength for my weakness.
Open unto me—wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me—forgiveness for my sins.
Open unto me—love for my hates.
Open unto me—thy self for my self.
Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

THE PRAYER GROUP

The Prayer Group, which has been meeting every week for about one and a half years, evolved from a Lenten book discussion of Henri Nouwen's *The Road to Daybreak*. We realized prayer needed to be more of an essential component of our lives.

There is no set format for our meeting. Sometimes we start with a hymn or quiet meditation, sometime a prayer of thanksgiving or confession. We always play soft background music. Every week we pray a litany of healing and offer special prayers for immediate personal and global concerns. You are welcome to bring your own favorite prayers to share.

Meetings usually last a half hour but can be longer depending on the needs of the participants. We meet at **noon on Thursday in the Tower Room**.

Barbara and Michael Sofia

***MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR***



THE NEWSLETTER



You can help to brighten the church sanctuary for Christmas by the gift of a **poinsettia plant**. Plants cost \$13 and must be ordered no later than **Wednesday December 11**, by calling the church office at 201-944-1358. When ordering your poinsettia, please let Michele know if you wish it to be in memory of someone or in celebration of a special event. Please make your check payable to the Presbyterian Church marked "Poinsettia" and let us know if you wish to take your plant(s) home after Christmas, or for us to give it to homebound friends.

JAZZ JAM - DECEMBER 12 AT 8:00 – 10:00 P.M.

Player or audience, everyone is welcome! Bring your instruments and play with pros. Don't worry, any level of player is welcome! If you don't know Jazz, or you don't have any plans on **Friday, December 12, 8-10 p.m.**—you are welcome to play or listen. A small donation will be accepted to cover utility costs. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. **PLEASE JOIN US!**

Faith Guides



Each year members and friends of our church share their Christmas generosity through the "Alternative Christmas Gift List." As you consider your Christmas gifts, think also of your neighbors in need, and donate to a local charity in honor of the birth of Jesus.

Please use the opposite side of this sheet to indicate your gifts. First, decide which ministries you would like to support and in what amounts. Then bring your list and a check made out to the Leonia Presbyterian Church, to the Christmas Gift table on **Sunday December 14 or 21**. Or mail it to the church, P.O. Box 448, Leonia, NJ 07605.

In addition to supporting the alternatives on this list, you may wish to purchase a gift for one of the residents of the **Oelhaf House Shelter** and others we know who are in need. Gift tags with specific requests will be available at the Christmas Gift table on Sunday mornings December 7 and 14. Please bring these gifts during worship on **December 21**.

Name

2014 Christmas Gift List

*AMOUNT I WOULD
LIKE TO GIVE* _____

1. **Center for Food Action** in Englewood provides a food pantry for emergency assistance, nutrition and budget counseling for individuals and families. CFA also provides advocacy services for hunger-related issues and assists clients in providing funding for housing and utilities. \$ _____

2. **Oelhaf House Shelter Fund** helps to maintain the shelter and provide for direct services to women and children, such as child care and transportation subsidies, special meals, and assistance when families leave the shelter for more permanent homes. The Oelhaf House is a church-owned structure used by Shelter Our Sisters, Inc. as a second-stage transitional housing for victims of domestic violence. \$ _____

3. **Community of Friends in Action** is a group of volunteers from the community, churches and synagogues that works with immigrant day laborers in the area. Currently they run a Monday program at noon at a church in Palisades Park that provides lunch and speakers on various topics such as worker rights and community relations. They also provide evening English classes, a workers link program and assistance in collecting unpaid wages. \$ _____

4. **Loaves and Fishes** is sponsored by the Englewood, Leonia and Teaneck Cluster Churches and is located at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Englewood. They serve a weekly hot meal and send clients home with a light bag meal of a sandwich, fruit and snack. \$ _____

5. **Camp Johnsonburg** is the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center located in western NJ, an hour's ride from our area. Our church has enjoyed Camp Johnsonburg for the past 30 years or more and many of our young people have been campers and/or counselors. \$ _____

6. Undesignated Gift- _____ \$ _____

YOUR TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

Thank you! May the blessing of Christmas be with you always.