

# THE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2015

## FROM THE PASTOR

There is much turmoil in the world as we approach the celebration of Christmas this year. We are bombarded with images of swarming refugees, desperately seeking to escape the widespread violence and terror in their home towns.

The people of Syria are living with two terrors: the Assad Regime and ISIS militias. Between the two, over 220,000 men, women and children have been killed in the last four years. Half the population is displaced within Syria, and over 4 million people have fled the country and are living as refugees in neighboring nations. This fall, our President agreed to settle 10,000 refugees from Syria here. But after the Paris attacks, more than half of our country's governors announced they would not welcome them. They cited security concerns, even though the US resettlement process is the most rigorous and discriminating in the

world.

At a time such as this, Christians should call to mind the entire story of Christmas, including the parts that are never read aloud on Christmas Eve.

According to the gospel of Matthew, after the Wise Men found Jesus and paid him homage, King Herod, in a brutal rampage, murdered all the baby boys in Bethlehem under the age of two (2:13-18). Bethlehem was filled with loud wailing and lamentation, mothers weeping for their children, and refusing to be consoled. The world doesn't change much, does it? But Mary and Joseph took Jesus in the middle of the night and fled to Egypt. And they stayed in that foreign country until they learned that Herod had died. Jesus began his life as a refugee seeking safety among strangers.

Not only was Jesus a refugee, a major theme of



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

of scripture is to care for refugees and strangers. Leviticus (19:33-34) says "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt." Jesus invited people to

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## HEADLINERS

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**CAROL SING** see article on Page 2

**PLEDGE UPDATE**, more information on Page 4

**ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST ENCLOSED**

### From the Pastor (continued)

partake of the joys of God's eternal kingdom saying, "For I was a stranger and you invited me in..." (Matt. 25:25-36). And Hebrews (13:2) says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for in doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it." We hear of angels singing at Jesus' birth in the Christmas story. Who would think we might actually meet one by welcoming a stranger?

As Christians we are not to choose the path of fear. Yes, screen refugees carefully. But remember also God's way is to love our neighbor as ourselves. May we remember our neighbors this Christmas, and do what we can to welcome them.

Peace in Christ,

Debra Given

### *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

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



### COME, LET US WORSHIP GOD...

#### **12/6 Second Sunday in Advent - 10:30 a.m.**

Service for the Lord's Day will include a Celebration of the Lord's Supper

#### **12/13 Third Sunday in Advent - 10:30 a.m.**

Service for the Lord's Day

#### **12/20 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 Thursday, 8:00 p.m.**

Service of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight.

After Worship: Fellowship Hour

#### **12/25 Friday, 10:30 a.m. Christmas Day**

Joyful Christmas worship with communion

#### **12/27 10:30 a.m.**

Service for the Lord's Day and Carol Sing (No Church School Classes)

### **CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

**REHEARSALS** for the Children's Christmas Pageant will take place at **9:30 a.m.** on **Sundays December 6, 13** and **Saturday the 19 (at 12 Noon)**, with a final run-through on **Sunday December 20** before worship. It is **IMPORTANT** that parents and children make every effort to participate. Congregation members are invited to join the children as they go **caroling** at Inglemoor Rehabilitation Center in Englewood on **Saturday afternoon, Dec. 19**, after the pageant rehearsal.

### USHERS FOR THE MONTH

December 6 Maryellen Neu, Judith Nyirongo  
& Ammal Varky  
December 13 Susan Dindial, Vicky Li &  
Fara Razafy  
December 20 Karen Peters, Barbara &  
Michael Sofia  
December 27 Linda McGarry, Jack Peters  
& Tom Topousis

### OFFERING COUNTERS

December 6 Jonathan Phillips & David  
Voreacos  
December 13 Hyung Shim & Fumio Ito  
December 20 Ginny Brown & Olivia Taylor  
December 27 Pete Shanno & David  
Voreacos

### NURSERY CARE

December 6 Vicky Li  
December 13 Lisa or Joe VanDeWeert  
December 20 Kristen Richter



### **DECORATE THE SANCTUARY**

Please join us on **Sunday, December 6** immediately following worship 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.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 AFTER WORSHIP  
THERE WILL BE A CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING TO ELECT OFFICERS AND  
RECEIVE THE RESIGNATION OF  
PASTOR GIVEN.**

## **THE CENTER FOR FOOD ACTION NEEDS YOUR HELP**



The Center for Food Action needs your help this year, 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 6th and 13th. You may purchase one of the indicated gifts and offer it — wrapped for Christmas—during worship on the 20th.
- ♦ 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 pledges totaling \$118,388 through November 30th. We are especially pleased to receive 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! Thank you!

### **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 201-+702-6618. He may be able to help you.

### **FAMILY PROMISE**

Once again, we are sheltering the Family Promise group at First Presbyterian Church in Englewood. We will need volunteers to cook and be overnights on December 22. We will need 2 cooks and 2 to stay overnight. Please contact Linda McGarry (201-945-7667) with what time and talent you wish to donate. Thank you.



## THE NEWSLETTER

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### POINSETTIA PLANTS

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 **Sunday, December 13**, by calling the church office at 201-944-1358. When ordering your poinsettia, please let us know if you would like 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 SESSION FRIDAY DECEMBER 11 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 11, 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.



# ***CHRISTMAS JOY***



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 13 or 20**. 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 6 and 13. Please bring these gifts during worship on **December 20**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

## 2015 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.***