



Spreading Branches

The Newsletter of Lansdale Presbyterian Church

450 Oak Park Road

www.lansdalepres.org

(215) 368-1119

"I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me bears much fruit..." John 15:5

January 2024

Steadfast Love in an Unsteady World

A memory I have from growing up was the annual visit to the New Year's Eve service in our local parish church in my hometown. My parents would hold a New Year's Eve party. Then around 11:30 pm everyone would go to church together to "See in the New Year." My specific memory is sitting quietly in a huge church with a high ceiling, and my Mum nudging me on the stroke of midnight and whispering in my ear "Happy New Year."

But so much has changed since then! Yet through it all, the Lord has been with me.

Think about the changes that you have had to deal with in this last year in your family, in your home, with your work, and even in our church family.

At the start of December my parents moved into assisted living. In May we welcomed Noah into our family – an unexpected, yet very welcome gift from the Lord. So in our home, life has gotten very different! (Sometimes people ask me if having a baby makes you feel young again. If anything, it underlines the opposite!). And within LPC, in the Lord's kindness and goodness, we have seen significant change. Over this past year we have welcomed many new members into the church family. Currently, average attendance is nearing 250 each week. Most recently, we've welcomed Chris Greene on to the Staff Team. In January, we will send Rachel Hart to work overseas, and in February say a very heartfelt "thank you" to Lori Davis as she retires from her role as Office Manager.

While some of this is inevitable and much of it is good, it can still make us feel uncertain, unsettled, and unsteady, can't it? We know that the Lord is still the same, that he is good and that his steadfast love endures forever as we saw together in December from Psalm 118 (verses 1 and 29). But what might believing what that truth looks like, especially when life feels shaky?

This is where I find these words from Lamentations so encouraging:

"The steadfast love of the *LORD* never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." - Lamentations 3:22-23

The word for steadfast love is the same that we see throughout the Scriptures. In Hebrew the word is *Hesed* (pronounce the 'h' as if you're clearing the back of your throat and you've nailed it). It describes the Lord's special, promise keeping love that he shows specifically towards his people. The love that says, "I will be your God and you will be my people." That ties in with the name of what's used to refer to God here – LORD – capitalized in the English translation – it's Yahweh – the promise making and keeping, true and living God. This is his special name that he reveals to his people as he rescues them out of slavery in the book of Exodus.

Now if you've been around LPC for any length of time, you'll be familiar with these wonderful truths. But what's particularly striking about the use of these words in Lamentations is the time and the place in which they are written. The clue is in the title – they are part of a "lament" a song of sadness and mourning and despair. Why? Because the people of God are facing uncertain, unsettled, and unsteady days. They are in exile.

God's people are mourning the fact that they are outside of the Promised Land because of their persistent rebellion against God. Things are not what they once were, or how they ought to be. Overall, this book is an expression of sorrow, of despair and unresolved strife.

Yet there are also glimpses of hope. At the heart of the book (3:22-33) is an assertion that God does not give up on people who will turn to him for help. Even though God's people have previously sinned against him, there is an appeal to God for help. There's also an expectation that he will forgive and restore, because his compassion is greater than his anger (3:31-33). On what grounds? "According to the abundance of his steadfast love" (3:32). It's that word *hesed* again.

This side of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we know that God's steadfast love is revealed to us fully in Christ. So, John writes:

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:7-11

This is part of a letter sent to God's people scattered all over the place. Whatever the context you are in, says John, you know the nature of God's love. You know that in Jesus, God loved you and sent Jesus Christ, his Son, to be the one who deals with his just anger against you. That gracious love of God defines us, and it ought therefore to define the way we love each other, says John.

What a wonderful steadying reminder as we step into a New Year together! Can I encourage you to continue to pray for the on-going life and witness of LPC? Specifically, to pray each day for this church, through the lens of the Lord's steadfast love. Pray that we might not only know about this love, but truly know it as it is worked out in our lives – in our relationship with the Lord and with each other, including through any changes he brings.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Chris



Seniors Living in Christ (SLIC) Christmas Lunch

On a chilly but sunny December 14th, our seniors gathered in the LPC café for their traditional Christmas lunch. SLIC provided the ham and everyone contributed to the delicious meal of pineapple stuffing, potatoes, green bean casserole, carrots, cole slaw, rolls, and dessert. It was good to gather to enjoy a delicious meal, fellowship with one another, laugh together, and exchange Pollyanna's under the Christmas tree.

SLIC will not be meeting for the next few months. Watch for details on their traditional kick-off event in the spring, **"Everybody's Birthday"**. There will be a planning meeting during the break to plan next year's events. All are welcome to attend with ideas to share. Look for an announcement in the bulletin.



Year End Giving Statements

The 2023 statements will be available early in January for your review and tax purposes. Please review your statements right away. If you have any questions or find discrepancies, please direct your questions to:

Bob Wunderlich, Treasurer, or
Amber Etherton, Bookkeeper.

Offering Envelopes are the method the Deacons have for keeping records of your gifts and tithes. Each year you receive a statement for your tax purposes (acceptable by the IRS) from the records kept from your envelope giving.

If you would like envelopes and do not have them, please contact: Amber Etherton
Amber@lansdalepres.org
(215) 368-1119, ext. 21

If you haven't received your offering envelopes for 2024, check your mailbox in the office (if you currently have one) or the Welcome Center in the church lobby.

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, February 4, 2024

All Church Lunch following the
10:30 am Worship Service

Congregational meeting following
the lunch

No evening groups or meetings

Watch the Sunday bulletin for details.

Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study

The Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study resumes on January 10th at 9:15 am in the church library. The topic of study will be Luke: Part 2, an AT HIS FEET BIBLE STUDY. If you're a woman who feels like you don't have time to study the Bible in a deep, meaningful way but want to, this is the study for you! Watch Jesus up close as he begins to reveal the cost and call of discipleship and the astonishing upside-down kingdom of God.

Questions? See Sue Pennington, Nancy McDermott, or Denise Mooney.

Annual Reports 2023

Annual reports for January -
December 2023 are due to Lori
Davis no later than

Monday, January 15, 2024.

This will allow time to print and
have them available to the
congregation the week prior to the
congregational meeting scheduled
for Sunday,
February 4, 2024.

LPC Service Fair

February 4 & 11

Learn more about LPC
ministries and how you
can be a part of them!

Winter Weather Alert System

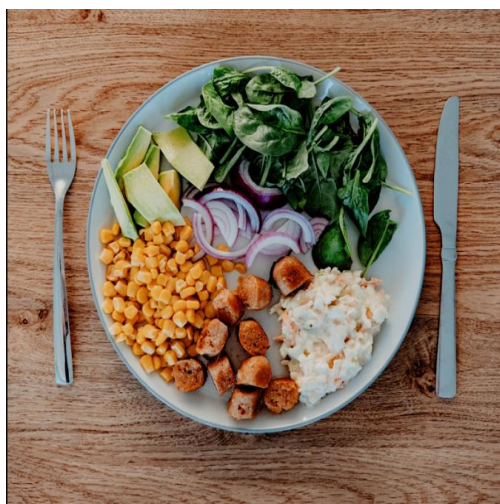
The church has an automated system to contact
members and friends about weather related
schedule changes. *There are two ways to sign
up:*

1. Simply text the word: **snow** to (215) 631-3144. You will receive a link to provide your name, email, and mobile number.
2. Sign up on your connection card - just write the words: Weather Alert and make sure your name, email, and mobile number are on the card. You will automatically receive text and email alerts with the relevant details for any weather-related schedule changes.

*Note: If you signed up last year, you do not need to
sign up again!*

Cancellations

In case of inclement weather and there is
question as to whether services will be
cancelled or modified, announcements will be
sent by text and email, (see above for sign up
information) OR you can call the church at
#(215) 368-1119 and listen for updates.



FOOD FROM THE HEART Schedule Change for January

**This month's dinner will be a week earlier on January 21st
Join us at 1:00 pm**

Help can always be used in the kitchen, serving our guests,
cleaning up and sitting and fellowshiping with our guests.

Questions? See Rob Hand

Through the Bible 2024

reading guides are now available!

Pick one up in the church lobby.

What is GriefShare?

GriefShare is a grief recovery support group for grieving people due to the loss of a spouse, child, family member or close friend. The griever needs ongoing support and encouragement, lasting months, or perhaps longer.

GriefShare meetings will begin on Thursday evenings, February 1 – April 25th. They will meet in the LPC library at 6:45 PM and end around 8:15 pm. The series is 13 weeks and while it's ideal for group members to attend all 13 sessions, each weekly session is designated to be "open", meaning a person can begin attending at any time. Members will find comfort, answers, and hope in every session.

For more information, please see the information on the table in the lobby or Marilyn Rudolph.



SANCTITY OF HUMAN
Life
SUNDAY January 22, 2023

Grace Changes Everything

NorthCare
WOMEN'S CLINIC

www.northcarecommunity.org

The poster features a background image of a woman holding a baby on a rocky beach with waves in the background. The text is overlaid on the image in various fonts and colors (blue, white, and teal).

NEW ADULT SUNDAY CLASS



HOPE | EXPLORED

WHAT'S THE BEST FUTURE
YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE?

HOPE | EXPLORED

BEGINS SUNDAY
JAN. 14 AT 9:15AM

TAUGHT BY
PASTOR KENNEDY



NEWCOMERS!

*Get to know the
pastors over lunch!*

Sunday, Jan. 14
12:15 PM | The Commons



WE WILL BE CELEBRATING
Communion Sunday, Jan. 7

Hey Kids!

4 YEARS - 5th GRADE

Join us for a fun night of
games, learning about
Jesus and dinner!



Sunday, January 28 • 5:30 - 7:30PM

Lansdale Presbyterian Church

2024 MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Sunday, January 28



Rev. Hugh and Martine Wessel, MTW's missionaries since 1979, will be our guests and share about their ministry in France.

Watch for more details to come.



WIVES OF ELDERS

CONNECTING, SERVING, STRENGTHENING **cdm**

for PCA Ruling and Teaching Elders' Wives

WE (Wives of Elders) exists to connect and support Presbyterian Churches of America (PCA) elders' wives for the strengthening of Christ's Church. This is a relatively new ministry initiative that will come alongside both the ruling and the teaching elders' wives in the PCA. Meaghan May in Ashburn, Virginia currently serves as the Elders' Wives Liaison of the PCA.

January

- 1 Rev. Brian and Mary Hand away
- 1-2 Church offices closed
- 4 6:00 am Men's prayer meeting *
- 7:00 pm Session meeting
- 5 10:30 am Bible study *
- 7 8:00 am Band Rehearsal *
- 9:15 am Sunday School for all ages *
- 10:30 am Worship Service *
- Rev. Chris Kennedy preaching; Communion
- 5:30 pm Youth Group *
- 8 7:00 pm Moms Together
- 9 9:30 am Moms Together playdate **
- 6:30 pm ESL Classes *
- 10 9:15 am Women's Bible Study *
- 7:00 pm Women's Ministry Committee mtg.
- 7:00 pm Missions Committee meeting
- 11 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study ***
- 13 2:00 pm Memorial Service for Kay Edmondson
(1:00 pm Family receiving guests)
- 14 10:30 am Worship Service *
- Rev. Chris Kennedy preaching
- Deacons' Report/Offering
- 12:15 pm Lunch with the Pastors
- 15 Deadline for Annual Reports
- 7:00 pm Mercy Committee meeting
- 18 7:00 pm Session meeting
- 21 10:30 am Worship Service *
- Rev. Brian Hand preaching
- Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- 1:00 pm Food From the Heart Dinner
- 23 7:00 pm Finance Committee meeting
- 26-28 Missions Conference Weekend
- 28 10:30 am Worship Service *
- Rev. Hugh Wessel preaching
- Evening Missions Conference
- Kingdom Kids
- 29 1:00 pm Worship Committee meeting

Community groups meet as scheduled each week

* Meets weekly

** Moms Together playdates meet weekly and alternates between Monday and Tuesday.

*** Bible study group meets weekly and alternates between online and in person.