



UPDATE

December 2011/January 2012

Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church

600 W. Fullerton Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614-2614 • 773-248-8288

Jeffrey Doane, Pastor

www.lppchurch.org

Steve Hunter, Editor

Inside this Month's Update

Make it to Your Church Home for Christmas.....p.1

Invite a Friend to Church Challenge.....p.2-3

Advent Bible Study.....p.3

Mitten Tree, Poinsettias Hanging of the Greens.....p.3

Women's Book Group.....p.4

Christmas Schooner Musical.....p.4

Luminaria Project.....p. 4

KidsSpace Puzzler.....p.5

Women's Retreat.....p. 5

Clerk's Clippings.....p.5-7

Christmas Joy Offering.....p.7

Kidspace Players.....p.8

Fall Festival.....p.8

Remembering Jo Ann Reynolds.....p.9

New Church Directory, Cookie Exchange, LPPC Birthdays.....p.9

Make it to Your Church Home for Christmas

Now we enter the season of memory. 'Tis the season, when all it takes is a fragment of a carol, even in a store, to bring back the Spirit of Christmas Past.

I remember... I remember trees we decorated by the fireplace in my home of origin, and the growing pile of presents for shaking, squeezing and guessing... I remember excited anticipation... the first snow flakes: for forts and snowball throwing and Christmas angels... the unbelievable winter with four feet of snow when schools closed, cars couldn't go, and we took my sled to get groceries... family readings of *A Christmas Carol*, with Tiny Tim's "God bless us every one." I remember store windows with figures that moved, a shiny new bicycle, and Sunday school pageants with "And lo, there were shepherds abiding in the field," being outfitted in a bathrobe, carrying a cardboard crook... candlelight services, humming Silent Night...

This season, filled with yearning and wonder, beckons

us: Come home to Christmas. Each Sunday in the Advent season – beginning November 27, all the way to Christmas Eve and Sunday worship on Christmas day – bears the invitation to you to make it home for Christmas. Make it to your church home, to your church family, to celebrate the gift of God-with-us, *Immanuel*. It is the loveliest of seasons. Make it home.

Some of your neighbors don't have a church home, and so may miss out on the central spirit of it all. I encourage you to bring a friend. Let's share this joyous season – the carols, the candles, the Christmas story, the magic and mystery of it – and the warmth of this church community. Perhaps even we, who have known countless Christmases can hear and sense anew:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light..."

"To you is born this day a Savior..."

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace..."

Make it home for Christmas. We'll leave the light on for you.

-Kent Organ

The Advent “Invite a Friend to Church” Challenge

According to research described by Dr. Thom S. Rainer, 82% of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited. However, only 2% of church-going people – and that means us - invite someone to church in any given year. Further, 70% of the unchurched people surveyed said they had NEVER been invited to church.

I have all kinds of excuses for not inviting friends to church, and you probably do too. Mine are that I live too far away and my friends would never come to the city, and that some of my friends aren't believers and some are even resistant to church. What are your excuses?

Well, enough with the excuses. In light of the statistics cited above and our continuing complaint that we need more people at our services, I am challenging you – and me – to invite at least one friend to church this Advent season. Here are some of the opportunities to engage your friend(s) in wonderful seasonal celebrations at church and elsewhere – pick one or more and start inviting!

- Advent always has special music and that is a meaningful way to get in the spirit of the season each and every Sunday.
- We'll decorate the sanctuary on Saturday, December 3. If your friend will be traveling for Christmas and therefore not decorating at home, perhaps they'd enjoy decorating at our church home. Refreshments will be provided.

- The LPPC Alternative Christmas Store will be open December 3, 4 and 11. This is a great way to engage people in finding interesting, unusual and fair-trade gifts during hospitality. Invite a friend for to join you for coffee and shopping (and perhaps lunch afterwards).

- Sunday, December 11 has been designated as “Bring a Friend Sunday”. The worship service will include our KidSpace Advent celebration – and this year's offering promises to be different, engaging, and not-to be missed! If you invite a friend to nothing else, please invite them to this service. Perhaps your friends with children would especially like to come along?

- Our December 18 worship will have special choir music. It will be followed by our annual Cookie Exchange. Tickets are also available for this afternoon's performance of The Christmas Schooner at The Mercury Theater. If you're not sure your friend would come to a worship service, perhaps they'd enjoy cookies and coming to the theater with you.

- The Christmas Eve service with candle-lighting promises to be both atmospheric and enjoyable, anticipating the joy and excitement of the Christmas Day celebration.

- This year, Christmas falls on a Sunday. Our Christmas Day worship service will be an opportunity bring your friends who like Christmas carols to come and enjoy the singing of many favorites amidst their other celebrations.

So you see, there are many and varied ways to include a friend this season. Will you make a commitment to inviting someone? Please do – and invite them today before the year runs out and their calendar gets too full!

-Gale Morgan-Williams

Advent Bible Study Monday Evenings

Interim Pastor Kent Organ will teach a short course in Advent, titled “Come, Thou Long Expected.” Classes will begin at 7:00 and conclude at 8:15 p.m. on Monday evenings at LPPC, beginning November 28. What did the Hebrew prophets anticipate when they foresaw the arrival of a Messiah and the Messianic Age? What do the Gospel writers have to say about the coming of Jesus the Messiah? What are the unique emphases of Luke, Matthew and John? We will consider Prophetic Expectations on November 27, Matthew’s story December 5, Luke’s story December 12, and the Prologue in the Gospel of John December 19. You are invited. Consider bringing a friend.

The Mitten Tree

Christmastime is here again, and with it, cold weather. Time to get out our gloves, mittens and warm socks. But not everyone has those things on hand, including some shelter guests. So add one of these warm winter items to your shopping list, and place them on the Mitten tree in the Dreyer Room. The items will be given to the staff of the Lincoln Park Community Shelter for distribution. And by warming someone’

Remember Loved Ones at Christmas with a Poinsettia Dedication

Help adorn the sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship and honor loved ones with dedication message. Please submit your dedication message, along with your payment of \$25 to the church office by December 16.

Hanging of the Greens

Please join the Worship and Education Ministry Team for a few hours on Saturday, December 3 from 8:30 – noon to prepare the sanctuary for the advent season. We will begin with a short time of devotions and some light breakfast fare and then decorate. Following the sanctuary decoration we can all proceed to the opening of the Alternative Christmas Store for some shopping!

Volunteer Opportunities at LPPC

The third Saturday of every month is LPPC Night at the Shelter. LPPC provides a team of cooks to make dinner for the shelter guests. You can sign up on the volunteer sheet in the back of the sanctuary.

Our congregation also makes sack lunches for the shelter on a weekly basis. Funds are available to pay for supplies. Please contact Gerry Parker at gerryparker5@comcast.net.

Women's Book Group

All women are invited to participate in the book group. We read an eclectic selection of fiction and nonfiction and often have widely diverging reactions to the same book, making for lively discussions. We have pastries and coffee while we talk. Regulars who cannot attend are asked to let Norma Bennett (773-929-4400) know so the refreshments can be adjusted.

Books

December 10: "Cutting for Stone" by Abraham Verghese, contemporary fiction, sponsored by Marianne Nesler. Marianne will e-mail to book group members a map of the area to make it easier to follow the plot. Virginia will bring a large map for viewing at the meeting. Also, as background for the January meeting, Mary Russell will distribute a cheat sheet on the historical events of "Birds Without Wings."

January 14: "Birds without Wings" by Louis de Berneriers, historical fiction, sponsored by Mary Russell.

Logistics: We meet on the second Saturday of the month, at the Kenwood, 3121 N. Sheridan Road, Room 703, entrance on Briar Street where you sign in. If you drive, a few guest parking spaces are available and are assigned by the person at the front desk. You may pull directly up to the garage entrance on Barry St. and telephone the front desk at 773-404-9800 and ask to be assigned a parking space.

To find Room 703, our meeting space, take the first floor elevator to the mezzanine (push the M button). Exit at the mezzanine,

turn right, walk down a long corridor that jogs to the right until you find another elevator. Take that elevator to the seventh floor, turn right, and proceed to Room 703.

-Virginia Braxton

The Christmas Schooner – A Musical!

The whole family will enjoy this heart-warming story of the first Christmas tree ship, and the people who risked their lives to fill Chicago with the Christmas spirit. LPPC have reserved a block of seats for the Sunday, December 18th, 3:00 P.M. performance. You can read more information from the flyer and the signup sheet on the back table.

The Luminaria Project

In an effort to make our church home more visible and welcoming to the neighborhood on Christmas Eve, the Worship and Education Committee is planning to display luminarias outside on the sidewalk and steps to the church. We're looking for donations of ½ gallon plastic milk cartons (labels removed if possible) which will be transformed into luminarias. The KidSpace kids will have the opportunity to decorate them in the coming weeks. Please bring your milk cartons to the church as soon as possible (last collection Sunday is December 11). We're also looking for some help on Christmas Eve, prior to worship, to place the luminarias outside and light the candles. If interested, please contact Don Hunter at dehunter617@yahoo.com.

-Don Hunter

A Puzzler

Q: What do Zacchaeus, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar (I and II), the Samaritan, Jeremiah, Esther, Leah, Mary, Ezekiel, and the Prodigal Son have in common?

A. They were all part of the 2010 KidSpace Scrabble fundraiser!

Yes! These were the favorite Bible characters selected by our KidSpace Scrabble game players last year. If you participated – THANK YOU!! Your generosity has allowed our church to greatly improve the facilities and the welcome we offer out younger members and friends.



With the \$3, 500 you contributed we have been able to purchase: two large kid-friendly rugs for the sanctuary (featuring Noah's Ark) and the Dreyer Room (Jesus welcoming the children); a safety gate for the nursery; two adjustable height folding yellow tables for use in class and social events; 12 bright red and blue child-sized chairs; and a folding room divider that creates a classroom area with a wall on which we can post the children's work and key Bible messages.

If you haven't walked through the Dreyer Room in recent months, please come by some Sunday when there is class so you too can appreciate the form and function of these great new resources. As you will see from the photograph, the kids – and teachers – are really appreciating them!

-Gale Morgan-Williams

Women's Retreat: Save the Dates!

Dates: Friday, February 3 through Sunday, February 5, 2012.

Theme: And God Said, "Come out and Play!"

Leader: The Rev. Mike Vandersall

Place: Siena Center, Racine, Wisconsin

Who: Women of LPPC, together with women of First United Church, Oak Park

Cost: \$160 for the weekend, including all meals, private room, leader – quite a deal!

Questions? Ask Gerri Mead or Gail Russell, or any other women who've attended.

Watch your email for your invitation – coming soon to your inbox!

Clerk's Clippings: Reflections on Recent Doings

October 29, Part 1: 20+ of us gathered in the chancel of the church early that Saturday morning. The group included current elders and other members. We got together to create and re-tell the history of LPPC, from its early days, starting in 1844, as three Sabbath Schools, up until the present,

creating a “Wall of Wonder”. This storytelling is essential during this transition time in claiming our history and identity. We told many stories, and Kent placed brief references to those stories on a timeline of the church’s history. Newer members listened with interest as some of us who’ve been around longer recounted tales of incredibly successful capital campaigns, challenging times full of stress, and all kinds of celebrations. We identified heroes and other key people along the way. Stop by the Geneva Room and check out the “Wall of Wonder” – it’s really worth your time! And feel free to add your own contributions.

October 29, Part 2: Later, over lunch in a gathering held at St. Clement Parish House, Gerri Mead led the Session in preparing to make stewardship calls to members and friends of the congregation. We discussed how, particularly during this time of transition, it’s especially clear that our church’s ministry and mission are up to us. This is a team effort. If everyone will step up and do their part, by the grace of God, we can do great things! We also made our own financial commitments to LPPC: leaders should lead by example!

October 30: After Sunday worship, we gathered for a congregational meeting to elect elders for the class of 2014, and one person for the class of 2012, filling the term of Jo Ann Reynolds. For the class of 2014, we elected the following elders:

- Anne Griffin
- Robert Guenther
- Ben Ho
- Kenny Walker

And to fill Jo Ann Reynolds’ term, ending in 2012:

- Allan Wilson

In addition, we elected the following people to serve as members at large on the 2012 Nominating Committee:

- Hsuan-Min Chou
- Gerry Parker
- Hasmick Rich

Congratulations, all! I know we are all grateful for your leadership in this exciting and challenging time.

November 15: One highlight of our stated Session meeting was working together on a “SWOT” exercise; SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths mean internal strengths (those we experience within the congregation). Weaknesses are the opposite: internal or congregational weaknesses. Opportunities are those things outside the congregation which may be opportunities upon which we might capitalize. Threats are those threats that come to us through the environment in which we live. All of that being said, here are a few of the results we discovered in our discussion:

Strengths:

Our legacy as a congregation
Strong interim leadership
Sense of Community
Dedicated Core
Commitment
Worship Vitality
Specialty: traditional/non-traditional

Progressive
Values
Formality
Building

Weaknesses:

“Burn out” factor
Formality
Congregation that is white, educated and liberal
Building

Opportunities:

Partnerships: Shelter, other agencies
Keep connections
Expansion of KidSpace
Alternative service
Building
Neighbors

Threats:

Loss of identity
Economy
Decline of mainstream religion
Lots of competition
Less parking
Building
Neighbors

This exercise is an essential part of planning for the future as we work together in this time of transition. Individual elders also submitted longer SWOT lists, and you will be asked to participate in this kind of information-gathering at our annual meeting on Sunday, January 29. So be thinking of what you consider our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We will be looking for your input!

We learned that Wicker Park Grace will be moving to an art gallery in Humboldt Park, starting November 27. While they have enjoyed their time with us, their identity has been very connected with the arts, and gathering in an art gallery. And they will soon have a new name: Grace Commons. We wish them well as they grow in new ways.

While there were many more items on our “plate” as a session at our November meeting, these were among the most important things we considered.

-Gail Russell, Clerk of Session

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy offering will be taken on December 18 this year. What is the Christmas Joy Offering? A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The money is distributed to the Assistance Program of the Presbyterian Board of Pensions, and to student scholarships to Presbyterian related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Put in starker terms, it provides aid to retired pastors and their spouses whose pensions do not provide them with enough to live on. It also helps students pursue higher education that would otherwise be unable to. At least one member of our congregation was able to attend college in part due to a scholarship that came from Christmas Joy offerings. So please give generously.

-Steve Hunter

Kidspace Players

On December 11, the big kids and the smaller kids from Kidspace will present “How the Grinch stole Christmas” as part of the morning worship service.

I asked the artistic director, Zoe Prekop, why the high school team decided on the Grinch as the offering for the day. “We wanted it to be fun and we wanted it to be a story that both kids and adults would recognize. We think it fits into worship because it brings in the Christmas spirit, and it’s not about all the stuff.”

Others said that the main message of the story is: the happiness of others can enlarge the heart of even mean people.



Planning for Christmas Pageant

So the producers have edited the script, have recruited many young voices to be Whovians and conducted practices in order to get the timing just right.

Bring a friend and bring yourself for this lively Advent worship.

Fall Festival

The Fall festival, with the Chili cook off, pie contest, and pumpkin decorating, was once again a big success. Everyone was a winner because everyone got to eat!



A Friend Remembers Jo Ann Reynolds

Editor's note: Steve Crow was a long time member of our congregation who moved to Oregon a few years ago. He knew Jo Ann Reynolds for many years and shared this letter with the congregation.

Dear LPPC friends,

I am sorry I was not able to make arrangements to be in Chicago last Friday to share in the celebration of Jo Ann's life. I greatly wanted to sing her on. Thanks, Gail, for the wonderful tribute you wrote in Update. It captured her LPPC life beautifully. God, she was PRESBYTERIAN! I certainly value, and will long remember sitting at Session table with her, envisioning and running the "big" Capital Campaign, singing with and hearing her sing. I'm sure she passed the angelic choir auditions! So I share in the congregation's grieving, but also in its thankfulness for the outstanding contributions she made to it.

Peace

Steve Crow



Jo Ann Reynolds, always faithful and committed, at the 2009 CWS/CROP Hunger Walk.

New Church Directory

The 2012 Church Directory will be prepared in January for release in early February. If you have a change in name, address, phone(s), fax or e-mail address, please notify Directory Editor Barry Smith or the church office as soon as possible. Non-member, regular-attending friends who wish to be listed, should also notify the editor or office.

168th Annual Cookie Exchange Dec. 18

Bring or buy several dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies to share during Sunday hospitality. Zip lock bags will be provided so that samples from others can be taken home. We'll also save a selection to share with our friends at the Shelter.

Birthdays at LPPC

December

- 3 Brenda Moore
- 3 Jeff Doane
- 14 Jim Poling
- 14 Gail Russell
- 21 Lucy Shair
- 24 Joellen Hosler
- 26 Blythe Howard-Chou
- 26 Dave Geilen
- 28 Christopher Carlozo
- 31 Peter Smith

January

- 2 Nadine Cummings
- 2 Mary Randall
- 4 Steve Crow
- 13 Suné Millard
- 18 Jeanne Hale