

# DECEMBER 2011

**Reaching the  
Community with the  
Good News**

**THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF LAMBERTVILLE  
First Presbyterian Church  
31 N. Union St., Lambertville, NJ**

**Rev. Dr. Peter W. Gregory, Pastor**

## **From the Heart**

### **Welcome Home This Christmas Season!**

We at the Community Church of Lambertville, First Presbyterian, have Good News of Great Joy to share. This Christmas Season we proclaim the Good News that Christ has come and nothing will be the same again. The Light of God has come, and we have been touched by the grace of God. And that Good News can change the world, it can change you and me.

Whether you have been born and raised in this community, moved away, or just have not been here in a while. We welcome you home this Advent and Christmas Season. Believers, searchers, not sure, you are welcome home, this is your church. No matter where you are in your spiritual journey this Holiday time, welcome home, this is your church. No matter the situation and circumstance of your life, welcome home, this is your church. You will be accepted and loved. This Christmas season we pray that you find God's presence in our faith community.

The Call of the Lord in Isaiah is that we are a "House of Prayer for all People". This Advent season we have Sunday School for all at 9:30AM. Worship at 10:30. On Sunday 18 December we will have our annual Choral presentation in the 10:30 service. Our Christmas Eve service times will a family service at 4PM and traditional candlelight at 8PM. On Christmas Day we will be having a 10:30 AM service.

We pray that the Lord is with you and blesses you this Advent season. Remember with the Good Lord, you are always welcomed home.

**H**onoring God and his Savior is our Mission

**O**utreach to the Community is our Common Goal

**M**inistry to those in Need

**E**quipping the Saints for Life

In Christ ,

Peter Gregory D. Min.

Pastor



**"I WILL RAISE**

**UP YOUR**

**OFFSPRING**

**AFTER YOU ...**

**AND I WILL**

**ESTABLISH**

**HIS KINGDOM."**

2 SAMUEL 7:12, NRSV

## Scripture and Sermons for December

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DATE	SCRIPTURE	SERMON
<b>12/4</b>	Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Mark 1:1-8	Come Lord Jesus
<b>12/11</b>	Isaiah 61:1-4 Psalm 126 John 1:6-8, 19-28	John the Hippie
<b>12/18</b>	Annual Choir Presentation	
<b>12/24</b> 4pm	Luke 2:1-14	The Emperor's New Clothes
<b>12/24</b> 8pm	Luke 1:5-38 Luke 2:1-14	With God, Nothing is Impossible
<b>12/25</b>	Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 98 John 1:1-14	You Got a Baby!!

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Luke's Gospel tells about Joseph and Mary taking the baby Jesus to the temple "to present him to the Lord" {Luke 2:22}. An old man approached and said the Holy Spirit has revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. Seeing Jesus and being moved by the Holy Spirit, this man proclaimed that the baby was indeed the Messiah.

What was the man's name?

- A. Simeon            C. Phaniel  
B. Simon             D. Zechariah



## **Ask the Pastor ~ *I lost a child due to stillbirth, but the Nurses at the Hospital did call not a Chaplain to Baptize my baby, is my baby in Heaven?***

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My prayers are with you for this unspeakable pain and loss. And I thank you for your question, as hard as it is to contemplate such issues. I have dealt with this matter many times in my days as a Hospital Chaplain and have been called many times to provide this service by the NICU nurse or doctors when these events happen. My heart is so sorry the staff did not offer this at the time.

I have found that many Christians, regardless of denominational or church background still assume the teachings of Roman Catholic Canon Law in regard to infant baptism, especially applied to still-born or pre-term deliveries. Catholic canon law holds that the Sacraments of the Church, confession, last-rites or baptism be offered at times of death or passing. That apart from the “Sacraments” of the Church, salvation is not possible, nor will the Soul enter Heaven. Hence a child who dies, or passes without the Sacramental blessings of the church is not in state of Grace as far Church doctrine is concerned. This is not only not Biblical, but an affront to the people of God.

In the Reformed and Evangelical churches we affirm, like the Catholics that Baptism is a Sacrament of God in Jesus Christ. But here is the big difference. We affirm that Christ and His Holy Spirit owns the Sacrament, not the human institutional Church. We also affirm that the Sacrament is a sign and seal of God’s Covenant grace and blessings extended to his family of faith in the community. Yes Baptism is a requirement for all believers, and should be provided either at the time of confession of faith for a person of age, or to a child, infant of a believing family. We believe that the Grace and blessings of God and Christ is extended to all children infants of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

In essence the Biblical answer is that we are saved by faith confession of Jesus Christ. The Sacrament of Baptism is not, nor should be thought of a “magic ticket” or “magic pass” into heaven. Yes, your baby, whom you and your husband named, whom you had a service of Christian burial, whom we dedicated to Jesus Christ, is with our Lord in heaven, in the Company of Saints and Angels. And you will see him again; your baby awaits you in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Remember, our God is a God of grace, mercy, and forgiveness. A God of possibilities. And a God who was said to Elizabeth at the birth of John the Baptist, “with God nothing is impossible”. Indeed your baby was and remains in state of Grace and forgiveness, he is with God even as we speak.





\*THIS MONTH'S\*

# birthdays

2—Brent Pursell

4—Carol Griffiths

4—Megan McIntyre

7—Joan Pierman

14—Esther Johnson

14—Brittney Shurts

18—Sandra Parker

19—Jacob Pursell

23—Daniel Fischer

27—Heidi Galloway

30—Caitlin Stratuik



## Christmas Program

**Our annual Christmas Program  
will be held on Sunday,  
December 18th during the  
10:30am Worship Service.**

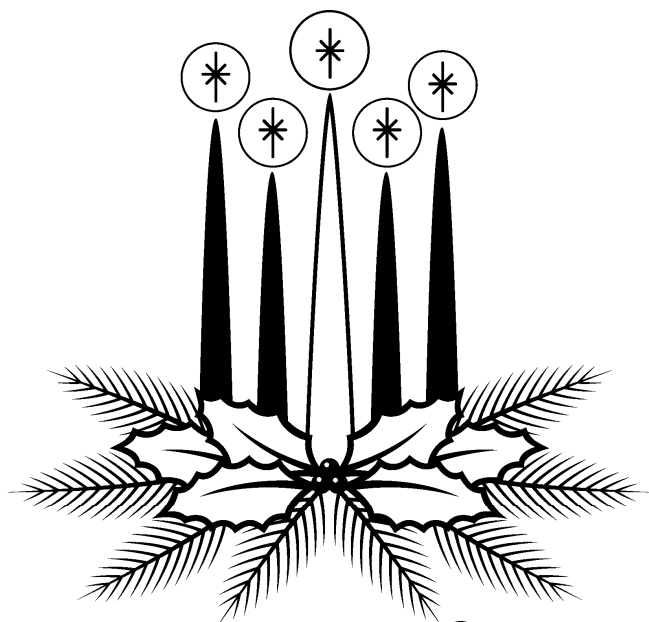
## Christmas Eve Services

The question is often asked, “What are we doing Christmas Eve?”

Traditionally have we two services at the church. The 4PM service we design for families with younger children, or those who would not be able to come to an earlier service. We always base the message on the traditional Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ and try to involve the younger folks as much as possible. This service is usually less than an hour in length.

We set the traditional Christmas Eve candle-light service at 8PM. We have found throughout the years that this time works best for all. Many families have plans with other family members later in the evening, and frankly some of our more mature Saints are unable to attend a later service, especially when weather becomes an issue in Winter. There are indeed many churches that hold a 12 midnight or even 11PM service that night, but we feel these times are best for all.

And yes, Christmas Eve is a Saturday this year, and I am sure some will say, “Are we having church Christmas Day”? I could not think of a better day, **TOO** have church. Indeed, this is the day that the Lord hath made!



## *Christmas Eve* SERVICE



*A  
Season  
to  
Rejoice*

The church office will be closed on the following dates:

Thursday, November 24th

Friday, November 25th

Friday, December 23rd

Friday, December 30th

Adult Sunday School in December

*Baby Jesus Through the Eyes of those Who Knew Him*

December 4            The Prophet Isaiah            Isaiah 40: 1-5

December 11            Zachariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist            Luke 1: 8-38

December 18            The Sheppard's and King Herod            Luke 2: 8-17  
Matthew 2: 1-12



*Wise Men Still Seek Him*

*Note: There will be no Adult Sunday School  
25 December and 1 January.*



Join us for Care &  
Share after each Sunday  
worship! Our hosts for  
**December are Session Members.**

*Please note that we will not have Care & Share on December 25th.*



**You are invited to attend our annual  
 Christmas Open House  
 22 S, Main Street in Stockton NJ  
 Sunday, December 4th  
 3:00pm — 6:00pm  
 Hosted by : Ken, Aarie, Sophie  
 & Isabelle Good**



**CHRISTMAS**

*Joy*  
 ☆

*Please join us for the annual  
 Ladies Christmas Tea on Monday,  
 December 12th at 7pm in the Church  
 Library. Drinks will be provided,  
 please bring a yummy dish to pass.  
 Please contact Heidi Galloway for  
 information at 609-865-7254.*



Come out and  
Join in the fun  
on Friday night  
starting at 7pm!

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Pastor's Veterans Page— **For all Vets and those who love them.**

***The VA disability System and medical care.***

I have a rated disability based on military service that entitles me to free medical care for life from the Veterans Administration. How is this possible? And do you need to serve a career or retire from military service to access this level of care?

In essence, any military veteran who has served in the military, and was discharged with an "honorable discharge", RE-1 code. Which is found on the DD-216 form, which one gets at time of discharge is eligible to apply for VA medical care, via the EZ form, which is found on the VA national website.

The veteran must include any relevant hospital, medical , doctor records that support a disability claim. There is no time exemption or due date post discharge to claim a disability. WW2 vets, who served 70 years ago, are still eligible to process a valid claim. Recently the VA expanded eligibility claim ability to Vietnam era Agent Orange Vets, as well as Gulf War vets for heart disease. These are but examples. VA disability claims will usually take 12-24 months to process, and the local VFW or American Legion Posts all have people on staffs that are able to assist in this process. So if you know a Veteran who may have a disability case, contact the VA to get the process started. The VA is there for all veterans of all services and service times.

Again this is not charity, or welfare, but a valid benefit earned for valid military service. The VA exists to serve and support our veterans. You never know the answer until you asked. The veterans earned that right to ask.

Peter Gregory

Commander

US Navy (retired)

## **December 2011 Elder Schedule**

December 4	Communion
December 11	Pat Buchanan
December 18	Russ Topping
December 25	George Warner

## **December 2011 Deacon Schedule**

December 4	Carol Griffiths {Karen T, Pat D:Communion}
December 11	Grace Hendricks
December 18	Grace Hendricks
December 25	Kara Serlenga

## **December 2011 Greeting Schedule**

December 4	Chris & Dana Garrenger
December 11	Joe Feraco
December 18	Jim Gallagher
December 25	Mark & Alison Dudick

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If you need assistance outside of office hours, please contact the Elders on call for **December:**

**Joanne DiBlasi 215-862-9832**

**Russ Topping 609-397-4856**

**Special Session Meeting--First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville  
October 30, 2011--11:35 A.M.--Adult Sunday School Room**

**Purpose of the Meeting:** An informational meeting of members of Session and a representative of Dawn Solar had been scheduled for Monday, October 24, 2011, as indicated in Session Minutes for October 17, 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss a proposal from Dawn Solar Company regarding a new heating system for the church building and a new roof that would include a solar panel system for our electrical needs. That meeting was held on October 24th at 7 P.M. in the church "Kick" room. Cassandra Kling, from Dawn Solar Company, made a presentation to members of Session present, and there was a period of discussion that followed. Pastor Gregory called for a special Session meeting to be held on Sunday, October 30, 2011, immediately following the worship service, to discuss and vote on this proposal, providing that the Session was ready to vote on the proposal.

**Present:** Rich Hopkins, George Warner, Russell Topping, Robert Holland, and Reverend Peter Gregory.

**Excused:** Pat Buchanan, Joanne DiBlasi

**Call to Order:** Pastor Gregory called the meeting to order, offered opening prayer, and declared a quorum.

**Review of Proposal:** Pastor Gregory and Rich Hopkins reviewed the proposal. Dawn Solar's proposal included the following elements:

Replacement of the present church roof with a sophisticated new roof that incorporated solar panels to generate power for the church facility. There would be no "up-front" costs to the church, but the church would enter into a 20 year contract with Dawn Solar to pay them for electrical energy generated by the panels and used by the church. Prices for the electricity would be comparable to our current rates. Dawn Solar would be entitled to energy incentives offered by the government for solar installations. They would also be responsible for servicing the electrical panels/system.

Dawn Solar would replace our present church heating system, including three boilers. There would be no "up-front" costs for the system, but the church would enter into a 10 year contract with Dawn Solar, whereby the church would pay \$650 per month for the new system. This equates to \$7800 per year for 10 years for a total cost of \$78,000 for the new system.

Dawn Solar would do a technical work-up for this proposal, procuring the permits required. In order to start work on the project, the church would need to sign a non-binding letter of intent authorizing the initial work to begin. Dan Serlenga, at the informational meeting of October 24th, indicated that the church would retain the right to hire an independent person to review the work that is done if the church so desired.

**Discussion:** Members of Session discussed the proposal.

**Motion:** There was a motion by George Warner, seconded by Russ Topping and carried to have our church authorize the signing of a letter of intent authorizing Dawn Solar to begin the process of implementation of the roofing/heating proposal.

**Follow-up:** Rich Hopkins will contact Elders not present regarding Session action and will contact Cassandra Kling regarding the letter of intent.

**Adjournment of Meeting:** Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert W. Holland

## Session Minutes—First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville

Westminster House—11/21/11—7 P.M.

CLASS OF 2012

Rich Hopkins

Joanne DiBlasi

CLASS OF 2013

Bob Holland

George Warner

CLASS OF 2014

Pat Buchanan

Russ Topping

Reverend Dr. Peter Gregory, Moderator

Elder Bob Holland, Clerk of Session

**Present:** Rich Hopkins, Joanne DiBlasi, George Warner, Pat Buchanan, Russ Topping, Bob Holland, Reverend Peter Gregory

**Call to Order:** Pastor Gregory called meeting to order with quorum present.

**Devotions/Prayer:** Bob Holland led devotions, using I Kings 19; 14 and 18 as Scripture text. Elijah, fresh from defeating the prophets of Baal and slaying them, was being hunted down by the evil Queen Jezebel. After running for 40 days, he hides in a cave crying out to God that “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” God answers by giving Elijah a job to do, further telling him that “...I reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.” Bob suggested that like Elijah, we too often fail to see God’s witness in the world around us. Taking the entertainment industry as an example, Bob gave some specific examples of Christians in the TV and movie industry who have declared their faith in powerful and visible ways. Our response should be: Pray that God will open our eyes to see His witness in the world around us, even in places that we don’t expect to find it; that we should pray for those in the entertainment industry that God would uphold them; that God would use their very visible testimony to bring others to Christ, and that their witness would move us to become better witnesses for Jesus.

**Session Minutes:**

Minutes of Joint Meeting of Session/Deacons--10/17/11--Correction: “With price locked in at \$334.9 per gallon” should read “With price locked in at \$3.334 per gallon.”

Special Session Meeting of 10/30/11: There was a motion by Russ Topping, seconded by Pat Buchanan and carried to approve both sets of minutes with correction as noted.

**Report of Clerk of Session:** Letter received from 1st Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield, New Jersey, requesting a letter of transfer for Gilbert and Bonnie Manskopf. **MOTION:** by Bob Holland, seconded by Joanne DiBlasi and carried to authorize letter of transfer, request to be processed by Administrative Assistant Aurie Good.

**Music/Worship:** Reviewed upcoming special services:

**December 18:** Choral Presentation scheduled. Children’s Pageant: George Warner is working with Danielle Grffiths on this. If there is a pageant this year, it may be moved to the December 24th 4 P.M. service.

**December 24:** There will be two services: 4/8 P.M.

**December 25:** 10:30 service; no adult Sunday School.

**January 1:** 10:30 service; no adult Sunday School.

**January 22:** Prayer and Healing Service

**Communion Service:** MOTION by Bob Holland, seconded by Pat Buchanan and carried to celebrate communion on January 8th instead of January 1st. Clerk will forward information to Karen Thatcher of Deacons.

Pastor shared letter to the congregation that will be included in the December Lambertville Light.

**Christian Education:** Regarding Adult Sunday School:

Will not be held on December 18th, 25th, and January 1st.

Pastor Gregory teaches on December 4th and 11th.

Jim Gallagher teaches from January 8th through February 5th.

**Building/Grounds:**

Review of bill for completed services from Buchanan Construction Company, totaling \$4,425.

Keys for the Church Facility: Pastor indicated the need to “re-key” our present locks in the interest of security, determine who is to have keys on a regular basis, and establish policy for other usage of keys and/or facilities. Will be discussed further at next meeting.

Dawn Solar Update: Pat Buchanan has had contact with Cassandra Kling, who is currently working with an investor to secure necessary funding for the project, further information will be forthcoming.

Snow Removal: Pat and Alan Durborow, and Tucker Griffiths have shoveled snow in the past. Rich Hopkins, Russ Topping and George Warner will help if available and needed. There was a question regarding working condition of snow blower in the shed. George will ask Dan Serlenga if he know about the condition of the snow blower.

**Budget/Finance:**

**First Review of 2012 Church Budget:** Rich Hopkins reviewed “first draft” of budget, which he worked on with Joe Feraco. There are several factors that cannot be established at this time: when new gas boilers will be installed and working; the exact date of the closing for the Studdiford. Factored into the budget was an estimate of 10K for fundraising and 120 K for plate offering. Session reviewed salaries for all employees and terms of call for the pastor. Budget will be further discussed and voted upon at the next Session meeting. Annual Congregational meeting will take place on January 29th, 2012 following worship.

**Monthly Budget Report:** George Warner reported on plate giving and the monthly budget report.

**Bookkeeper Report/Matters of Direction and Information:** Session reviewed items in this report that were received from Heather McIntyre. Of the eleven items noted, those requiring action were as follows:

Heather wants to close our credit card account with Staples and use our regular credit card for purchases. There are too many complications in using the Staples card and this would make purchasing much easier. **MOTION:** There was a motion by George Warner, seconded by Bob Holland and carried to close Staples account and use regular credit card for future purchases. The following items were also agreed upon by consent of Session:

Water Damage from Hurricane Irene: Damaged carpet will be removed from back supply room and nursery. Nursery will be re-carpeted and other surfaces painted. An insurance claim, previously submitted, will cover the cost of the repairs.

Putting doors on the shelf in the “Kick” room to allow for secure storage of Sunday School materials; cost about \$50; Nate McIntyre will donate time to install it.

Adding doors to the back storage room, keeping a hallway [egress] from the nursery and allowing for the locking up of the storage area, making it secure for storing all church supplies. Supply closet near front entrance to church would be for Grace’s kitchen supplies, with working lock to secure.

Signing paperwork for church to maintain investment services with Tim Stevens [our investor] as he has moved his office from Wells Fargo to Morgan Stanley.

Authorize sending a letter to Brinkers Fuel regarding a bill for restarting our furnace. Restarting was necessary due to the fact that Brinkers let the church run out of fuel. Our position is that we are not responsible for their error.

Discussion of Problems with Church Stove: There are a number of issues with the stove. Heather is sending a letter to Garland, the manufacturer of the stove, regarding them repairing it under warranty. Heather discussed situation with A.A., who will be using the stove during Thanksgiving and Christmas. They offered to have someone look at the stove, however, we do not want an independent person trying to repair it as this may void any warranty service from Garland. There are other options, but church does not want to spend any more money on the stove, will wait for reply from mfg.

**Church Usage Forms: Reviewed and revised “Short Term Contract” and “Long Term Contract.”** For the *Short Term Contract*, usage fees are \$100 for Activities Bldg, Kitchen, or Sanctuary, with a \$30 per hour fee for use of Sexton; a security deposit of \$200 being required at time of contract signing, returnable the following business day contingent on property security, church owned property, and sanitation reviews. For the *Long Term Contract*, weekly/monthly fees as follows: Activities Building 150/500; Kitchen 100/250; Library 100/300; Adult Ed. Room 60/200; Sexton \$30 per hour. It was noted that “The key for the facility may be accessed through the Sexton. The Sexton will be responsible for securing the rental space.”

**Church Catering Discussion:** Reviewed proposal regarding church catering submitted by Grace Reading. For original discussion, see Session Minutes of 10/17/11, Joint Meeting of Session/Deacons. **MOTION** by George Warner, seconded by Joanne DiBlasi and carried to approve proposal establishing Grace Reading as the exclusive provider of catering services for the First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville. Proposal details all procedures, responsibilities, liabilities, etc., relating to this business endeavor.

**Pastor’s Time:** Pastor Gregory handed each Elder a blank sheet of paper. He noted that each day of our lives is a gift from God, a blessing. The paper represents His gift of life. The question remains--what are we going to do with it? As we live our lives, we are writing on that paper. Are we honoring God and thanking him each day. What kind of Gospel are we proclaiming in and through our lives to those around us.

**Studdiford Update:** Work is still in process; we do not know exact date of closing at this time.

**Recognition:** Discussed recognition of people for services rendered to our church.

**Celebration of Communion** was celebrated on October 3rd and November 7th.

**Presbytery of New Brunswick Annual Examination of Session Minutes, Rolls and Register** was completed on October 29, 2011; minutes were approved "with exceptions."

**Church Decorating:** Will be held on Saturday, November 26th 10 AM to 2 PM.

**Session Care and Share:** Session will do Care and Share on December 4, 11, and 18. There will be no Care and Share on Christmas Day.

**December Prayer Meeting** will be held at the home of Pam and Bob Holland.

**Sharing of Prayer Concerns**

**Time of Prayer**

**Adjournment of Meeting** at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert W. Holland  
Clerk of Session