



The Presbyterian Church of Llanerch

211 Lansdowne Road, Havertown, PA 19083

610-789-1639; www.llanerchpres.org

OCTOBER 2015 News and Notes

Brothers and Sisters,

It happened just the other day. I was in line at the grocery store, waiting for the clerk to finish checking out the gentleman in front of me, with a rather impatient gentleman in line behind me. The first gentleman was sacking his groceries, helping the clerk and refilling his cart not realizing that she had completed the scanning of all of his items and had already announced his \$227.14 tab. In that instant, between the clerk finishing ahead of him, it struck me—I could pay for this man's groceries.

A lot of things went through my head at that point. What would I say? How could I afford to do that? What if he wasn't a family-man as his grocery cart bore witness to, but was some sort of deranged man who was a binge drinker and who would just spend his other money on gambling debts and cigarettes?

We all watched him as he fumbled slowly for his cash, eventually retrieving a handful of bills from his pockets—and with new \$100 bills so crisp it was painstakingly difficult to separate them, only agonizingly moments later could he lay out three to cover his shopping list—all sacked up and ready to go.

"Well! It's too late now. I COULD have paid his bill." I thought to myself. That is, if I hadn't been so afraid to do it. On reflection, even if it'd been someone with a lesser bill, or someone I was more certain of their worthiness, I'd have done the same. But what was different is that I wanted to be that kind of generous person, willing to throw caution to the wind and be the witness to Jesus Christ even if it mattered to no one else but me. Would Jesus have paid the bill for someone else, who otherwise seemed to have the money and resources? Or was his giving limited to those who were demonstrated as the least and the lost?

I was reminded of the story one of our seminary deans once told; he was running late to a board meeting, he hadn't carefully checked the gas gauge as he left one meeting to begin his journey back to the seminary, a couple hours' drive away. He ran out of gas along a lonely stretch of interstate but managed to call ahead to a gas station and a young man was willing to drive out with enough gas to get them back to the station. He was traveling with his teenaged daughter at the time, and gave her the opportunity to hand the young man two \$50 bills as a tip. The daughter observed later—"Dad, I think that nice fella would have been happy with just one of those \$50 bills, don't you think?" "Yes," he replied, "but I didn't want him to be OK, I wanted him to be ecstatic!"

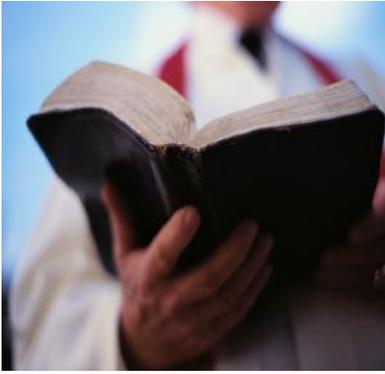
What would it be like to live in a world of ecstatic people? Happy to be alive, with joy at being blessed, able to help and be helped? Just think about that for a moment. ...Because, we can turn the world upside down just by giving!

Giving is everything. You're going to start hearing that theme at our Church—not because the Church needs your money, but because God has given to us, first. God gives us everything from the air we breathe to the ground we walk on—everything is God's and God shares everything with us—including the ability to create a whole new world through giving. God gives, we respond. God shares, we share. God loves, we love. Our "job" is to look like, to be like, to act like, to love, ...like God, as God does. That should be our calling card. Everywhere. With everyone. And giving is a key component and an essential element to any Christian's spiritual life.

I hope that next time the urge strikes me to be generous I won't be stuck or hung up on the dire warnings the world encourages me to think. That I can be responsible AND generous. That I can risk to love others just like God loves me. It may not be a large grocery bill, but perhaps an overly generous tip when I choose to eat out—because it can change the world of at least one other person! And just because we talk about MANY opportunities to give, we shouldn't think that "the Church always has her hand out." In order to "be like God," we need many, many opportunities to give like God. Our church isn't supposed to be the only beneficiary of your giving. No, Jesus has asked us to change the whole world!

A world of ecstatic people, where love and giving are alive? Yes, please. So come all the way into the life of our congregation where we believe "giving is everything" and our giving helps make and create a world of justice, righteous, ecstatic-ness, and peace.

Worship & Music News



Worship in OCTOBER

Remember these things about worship in September:

1. Sunday, October 4th is **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**. We'll celebrate the sacrament of our Lord's Supper, offer special blessings and prayers for the Yeaworths as they move to Seattle, Washington, and collect our cans for the Care Closet offering.
2. Sunday, October 11th, our morning worship service will celebrate the 20th Sunday after Pentecost. And in the afternoon, at 2:00pm, we'll have a special service for **Blessing of the Animals** that will take place at our Park Road entrance. Bring your pets, or just yourself, as we celebrate with our neighborhood and the community.
3. Sunday, October 18th might turn out to be ordinary, even though we will celebrate the 21st Sunday after Pentecost. [But at 21, the Church—that was born on Pentecost—will be old enough to vote (for equality), work full time (for justice), to open a savings account (for future generations), purchase tobacco products (to smoke out violence, hatred, and greed), and is now obligated, by law, to pay all debts she incurs (fortunately, that one's already taken care of—Jesus) Join us as we celebrate the Church's 21st Birthday!—well, sort of.]
4. October 25th is the last Sunday in October. It is also Reformation Sunday. It is also the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost.

DATE:	CELEBRATION:	FIRST READING:	GOSPEL:
October 4th	19 th Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 25: 6-10a	Mark 8: 1-10
October 11th	20 th Sunday after Pentecost	Amos 5:6-7, 10-15	Mark 10: 17-31
October 18th	21 st Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 53:4-12	Mark 10: 35-45
October 25th	22 nd Sunday after Pentecost	Jeremiah 31:7-9	Mark 10: 46-52

Don't contribute to grumpy cat syndrome; invite a friend to Church!

If you need an excuse, you can actually blame your cat! October 11th we will share a special "Blessing of the Animals" Service at 2pm. Your friends and neighbors **CAN BRING** their cat(s) or dog(s), their hermit crabs, hamsters, and goldfish—or other well-behaved, properly contained pets—to our Blessing of the Animals. We'll gather outside for a brief liturgy and blessing.

What a perfect idea for your neighbor's noisy dog that you've been privately been "blessing" on your own. "Hey, we're having a blessing of the animals at our church. What to bring your dog?"

Now, take a moment before you head out the door to come to church. ...who can you invite? Who needs a blessing today? You can be the connection! You can connect someone to Jesus. You don't have to preach, just offer an invitation. "Do you want to come to church with me, today?"



Church News & Events

JOIN US!

Blessing of the Animals



We didn't forget about the Blessing of the Animals. We're planning a service for NEXT SUNDAY, October 11th at 2:00pm, to take place on our front patio at our Park Road entrance. Bring your pets and join us for this special observance for us and the whole community! Please join us, even if you don't have a pet to be blessed! We want to make a good impression on our neighborhood and community, too!



Join us, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30TH at the Church for a Trunk-or-Treat and Halloween Party from 6:30 to 8:00pm. It's a party for the church and the preschool, the neighborhood and community!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- Volunteers to decorate trunks/vehicles (there will be a sign-up sheet!).
- Donations of candy and other give-away items for "treats." (You can bring donated items to the Church Office).
- Makers of other "treats" for refreshments and activities.
- We're also planning a brief Organ Concert for children and adults in the sanctuary. We also need Church members to participate and help the neighborhood and community meet the "spirit of Llanerch Church" as we invite them into our building and to meet us!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Our Christian Education Team is starting to provide a simple **pre-Sunday School experience for our younger children—our 3, 4, and 5 year olds** who aren't yet reading. These learning and story-telling opportunities will begin in October on the FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH and are being scheduled for the fall. If the first Sunday doesn't work, arrangements for a different Sunday can be made. We're starting younger and building our passion for the stories of Jesus!



Starting Sunday, October 4th, we will begin **gathering our Care Closet Containers and Donations during worship**. Our Sunday School decorated care closet containers for our church families, and we're inviting them to join our children in bringing the containers with you to worship on the First Sunday and we'll collect our special offerings DURING WORSHIP at the Worship Time for the

Younger Church.



SCOUTING NEWS



The scout units sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of Llanerch have expanded to include the Cub Pack 462, the Scout Troop 434, and the new Venturing Crew 434 which includes men and women to age 21. This has meant a lot of adult meetings and new training for a new set of leaders. The church is grateful for the volunteers who serve the community in this way and we're excited to see this program grow. A record number of forty scouts attended summer camp this summer, and they had a great time, canoeing, sailing, climbing, composing songs and earning a record number of merit badges. The scout Troop has started meeting at the church on their regular

Monday evenings; the Venturing crew will also meet at the church but on a less frequent basis. The first camping trip of the year was smaller and more serene by comparison, as a small group of scouts took their canoes up to the Delaware Water gap, paddling from Bushkill to Smithfield beach on the Pennsylvania side. The weather was beautiful and the scouts picked out some spots where they'd like to camp later. The next camping trip on the horizon will be a larger group going to Rickett's Glen in the middle of the month.

Before that, the church and the troop will be dominating the corner of Darby and Brookline at Township Day. The troop will be frying and selling funnel cakes for their annual fundraiser, and the cub scouts will be selling snacks and drinks, alongside the Preschool pretzel booth. The scouts are grateful for your support!

Generosity and Gratitude



Stephen and Kim Gibson, David Gibson's family have been selected to be the recipient of a new program from TD bank; we are asking that you collect change, donate it at the TD on Springfield Road in Broomall on October 23rd, and TD will match up to the first \$2000! This will be a huge help to offset some of the mounting costs for David's treatments, and with a little help, we can all bring about a little change! You'll find change collection containers at Church!

Pledged Giving Update

Our shared ministry to the church and the community depends on the regular support of all members, even during the slow season of the summer. The Treasurer has reported to Session that adult offerings fell short of the amount that had been pledged by about \$6,000 for the last three months. If your travel and family activities meant that you weren't in town, we welcome you back. We encourage you to help us make up this shortfall but checking your progress in meeting your pledge. If you can do more, this is a wonderful time to show your support for the work we are doing for the congregation, the groups we serve in the church, the groups we serve in the community, and our larger ministry to the world.



Giving is Everything.

So, you'll have to imagine the cartoon. There's an older lady at her door on Halloween with three little trick-or-treaters at her door, along with one large figure. The lady's smile says a lot about her joy, perhaps even her love of children. But the larger figure is dressed in a black robe, he carries a large scythe, and it would be wearing a menacing mask but on second thought it's a face.

The dialogue is simple. The first balloon, above the menacing visitor reads, "I'm not wearing a costume, I'm just here to take your so-u-..."

The second balloon, above the same figure, as if in reply to the gift, the picture of the older woman placing candy directly into the strange visitor's hand, "Holy [*insert your favorite expletive here*]! Full-size Snickers!"

The third balloon, and implying a kind of disappointing conclusion of sorts, "Never mind, Margaret. We're good!"

Giving is everything. Because giving can change everything. EVERYTHING!

The Bible begins with the story where God looks on the chaos of the waters and God GIVES in response. That image is worth remembering in a world where that constantly offers chaos and disappointments. God gave to us a beautiful garden, God gave to us a beautiful life—and called them good.

If nothing else, the church's place in the world reminds us of God's goodness and God's gifts to us. But there's a lot more "else." God gives, but then WE respond to that giving with our own giving. When we share what we have, when we give to others, we take those same steps that God took when God responded to a world in need. And, we know that's how God still responds to our world in need—by giving, but also giving that includes OUR OWN giving, too. We become co-creators with God and we believe our giving is also how WE can change the world with God.

This Stewardship Season, we're going to talk about giving—as everything—to our response to God as faithful, Christian, believers. God's faithfulness, plus our faithfulness, equal changing the world! We're giving because the world needs us to help it change. That's the biggest picture. Church, is one of the pieces we believe is important to changing the world. Providing for worship, community, a word from the Lord and care for others—including the least and the lost—offers a potent witness for the vitality of a changed life and a changed world.

If everyone gave, like God gives?

Giving is everything.



If you have questions about online giving, Online Giving Workshops will be offered following morning worship on October 18th and 25th immediately following our time of fellowship. We can show you the quick and easy steps that allow you to make electronic gifts via our Mission Exchange website. Join us to learn how!

YOU CAN MAKE FINANCIAL GIFTS AND PLEDGES ONLINE!

You can make one-time or schedule monthly or weekly gifts using your checking or saving's account or credit card.

The easiest access is to go online to our church website, www.llanerchpres.org, click on the "DONATE" tab on our



homepage and then click on the "Give Now" button that appears on that page. Alternately, if you have a tablet or a smartphone, you can scan this QR code to go directly to our giving portal page.



SO, YOU CAN MAKE PLEDGES, YOU CAN WRITE CHECKS, YOU CAN PUT CASH IN THE OFFERING PLATE, YOU CAN GIVE ONLINE:

...But doesn't that just beg the question, "How much should I give?"

For years, this would be the place where church leaders answered faithfully: "A tithe is 10% of income."

In the 1990's, research indicated that Presbyterians gave just over 3% of self-reported annual income to their local congregation. Studies a decade later indicate that giving to local congregations has fallen almost a full percentage point, now hovering below 2.5% of annual income. Not only that, but increasingly we live in a culture with multiple worthy options for charitable giving—lots of causes that need our help, deserve our support, and in which Christians should participate!

In the days of the "faithful response" of giving a tithe of 10% of one's income, the Church typically served as the "clearing house" for giving. You could "give it all in one check," and your congregation would distribute the funds in its mission-giving budget. But money-savvy fundraisers have moved beyond that model. Today, we receive invitations from our church and all kinds of worthy causes and organizations. Answering the question about "how much" to give is a whole lot harder.

When you consider your church giving, think first about **percentage**. What percent of your income are you setting aside in your current giving or pledge to the church? See where it falls on the "tithing scale." Is it more than 10% or less? And maybe more importantly, is there "joy" in your giving? Are you satisfied in the ministry your gift provides?

A new conversation is emerging that suggests we consider a tithe 10% of income, but that one might divide the giving between giving to our local congregation (5%) and giving the other organizations and causes (5%). By the research, on average, this split-tithe would offer more income to congregations AND provide giving to other charitable causes and organizations—enough for all.

What do you think?

LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS:

PLEASE SPEAK WITH REV. STIPP-BETHUNE ABOUT YOUR INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION:



The Presbytery of Philadelphia has four regional commissions that meet for fellowship and ministry building among member congregations. Our congregation is a part of the **SOUTHEAST Regional Commission, which meets next on Tuesday evening, OCTOBER 27TH, at Swarthmore Presbyterian Church.** This meeting will focus on Spiritual Leadership for Church boards, aimed especially at Ruling Elders and Deacons. Additional information to follow. This event is FREE! And will include a FREE light supper before the meeting.



NEXT Church is sponsoring a Regional Gathering in Princeton, NJ on October 28th from 10am – 3pm.

The adrenaline of the fall start-up of programs and school has worn off. And the Advent planning is well underway. Mid-terms are upon you. Take a brief break from it and join us for a NEXT Church Regional Gathering to spark your imagination, think about ministry in new ways, and connect with other church leaders who are thinking creatively about what it means to be God's

faithful church in the 21st century. THIS EVENT WILL OFFER:

- Four dynamo 20-minute presentations, featuring church leaders like Aisha Brooks Lytle of Wayne Presbyterian Church, Andrew Foster Connors and Jennifer Barchi from Baltimore, and Nate Phillips, Co-pastor at Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church.
- Engaging conversations with pastors, seminarians, educators, and other church leaders.
- Centering worship.



A national conference for Presbyterian Teaching and Ruling Elders focused on stewardship and stewardship ministries in congregations!

FEBRUARY 28TH—MARCH 2ND IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

We are actively recruiting leaders from Llanerch to attend this event! It's a 3 day commitment, including travel to San Antonio and we're hoping to arrange travel and participation costs to be paid through a Presbytery funded scholarship. If you're interested in stewardship, meeting and learning with other Presbyterian leaders, and a national church experience (did we mention San Antonio... in February!) please speak with Rev. Stipp-Bethune!

Ways You Can Help



Should you be thinking about Advent Wreaths Already? Yes!

Maybe you're annoyed by the early Christmas shopping season but we need you to do us a favor and think about Advent for just a moment. Our Advent Wreath-making project requires some materials that can be acquired in this season before the season. We need a rather large collection of empty toilet paper tubes. We know you use them. You probably ordinarily recycle them. But please, in hushed anticipation, collect them and bring them to church and let us repurpose them into something useful, spiritual, and beautiful for you! You'll see a box soon in the Fellowship Room. Fill 'er up please!



We need Worship Leaders and Ushers

One of the worship values we hope to create is that worship belongs to the people as an expression of our diversity and inclusivity. The good news of Jesus Christ is that people "belong." We believe there is a place for everyone at Llanerch. And one of the ways we live that out, is *inviting people to participate in leading worship!* From reading and leading worship to opening the doors and greeting we need willing volunteers with bright shiny faces ready to help members, friends, and guests, experience the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Sign up by talking to Rev. Stipp-Bethune or sending an e-mail to the Church Office. Worship Leaders can also sign-up online by using this link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ifd7-lkfpGH2SCq3TwT36yUIMsSAh5ZuZAjmgIxAYl0/edit?usp=sharing>.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

	EVENT	DAY/DATE	LOCATION
	The Abigail Circle	no meeting in October	
	The Lydia Circle	Tuesday, October 13th 12:30 PM	At Church

HELPING AND GETTING HELP

Do you need a ride to church or know someone who does?	If you need a ride to church, the Deacons are happy to help! Or, if you or someone you know needs a meal, or a visit, please contact our Deacons.	Please see or call Vicki Murphy (610.446.0637) or any member of the Deacons.	
Monthly Care Closet Offering:	Will next be received on Sunday, October 4 th —in worship	If you know someone in need, please speak with Rev. Stipp-Bethune or Vicki Murphy	

Overview of New Beginnings for an Individual Church *Including Outcomes for Each Step Along the Way*

Phase One: Assessment (One Day)



Your assigned assessor spends a portion of that day with you, per the letter she or he will send to you. You are expected to arrange for people to do the building tour, the community tour, the meeting to review finances and the calendar. Your assessor meets with the pastor and the people over dinner and then either leads or takes notes at a feedback evening session with the congregation. The presbytery is involved in finding a facilitator for that evening. The assessor will take notes on what you or she learned and goes home and writes your report.

Outcomes: Your New Beginnings report.

Phase Two: Leader Training (Four hours)



The church will receive a little over four hours of training. During this training we introduce you to the foundational concepts undergirding New Beginnings, teach you how to read your report and how to plan for your small group meetings. We spend a little time on leading change in small groups, but the majority of the time is on understanding the report and the ongoing process itself. You want to have anywhere from 5 to 10 people on the team that should be willing to consider being small group leaders for the next phase. You will also serve on the team that will oversee the New Beginnings process. This training is offered in person on a weeknight, typically running as a working dinner meeting from 5 to 9 pm. It can also be done during the day if you prefer.

Outcomes: Leaders ready to run the process plus your small group meeting process ready to launch.

Phase Three: Discernment (typically 6 weeks)



The House Meetings (small group meetings held in homes or at the church) should involve at least 50% of the worshipping congregation to discuss the report. The schedule for these meetings is determined by your church. Participants will engage the conversation and discuss what they believe is God's mission for the church. Through conversations about the report and questions, you will begin to name and claim what you feel God is calling you to do and do in your community.

Outcomes: A recommended decision for your church's future from each small group.

Phase Four: Decision (usually takes a minimum of 6 weeks)



Each congregation does this step a little differently, but it is when you bring together the results of all the groups and make a decision together. Typically the small groups report pull together their results, report to Session and then make a report to the congregation.

Final Outcome: A decision about the future of the congregation.