



Spreading Branches

The Newsletter of Lansdale Presbyterian Church

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

February 2021

Added Focus for the Post – COVID Church -by Pastor Brian Hand

At our February 2015 Congregational meeting, Pastor Keane presented our newly refreshed vision- Gathering a community to live for Christ- with four key strategies: Encourage, Grow, Equip, Go. We stated at that point that we wanted to emphasize "Go." This really isn't a temporary kind of emphasis. There are currently around 3 billion people in the world who fit the category of being unreached with the gospel. Even in our own country, only 45% of Millennials are confident God exists. Jesus is clear, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The "Go" of the Great Commission is an emphasis that will be with us "to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Still, to emphasize one thing does not mean we should neglect our other key strategies...they remain **key** strategies. There is one in particular that I think needs some focus in light of the challenges resulting from the pandemic – **Encourage**.

Back in 2015, Pastor Keane referenced 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14- "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing...encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all," and the comment, "One of the benefits of living in community is having the encouragement of others. We aspire to be a community that openly acknowledges the challenges of living for Christ in this present world. And so together we commit ourselves to encourage one another with God's word, with prayer, and with acts and words of kindness."

Among the challenges of the last year has been the loss of community. All of us experienced this loss. For three months we were not holding in-person gatherings. Continued mitigation efforts in the community-work and school from home, social distancing, limited capacities, business closures and masks have been a source of contention. What is undeniable is that they all limit community and have had the negative side effect of increased feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness is no small matter. It caused even the bold prophet Elijah to flee in fear and despair of his life, "I, even I only, am left" (1 Kings 19). We are made for community as those made in the image of God who exists eternally within the community of the Trinity. The loss of community and loneliness means that we lose the wisdom of voices other than our own, making us more susceptible to the lies, discouragement, and temptation of Satan and our own hearts.

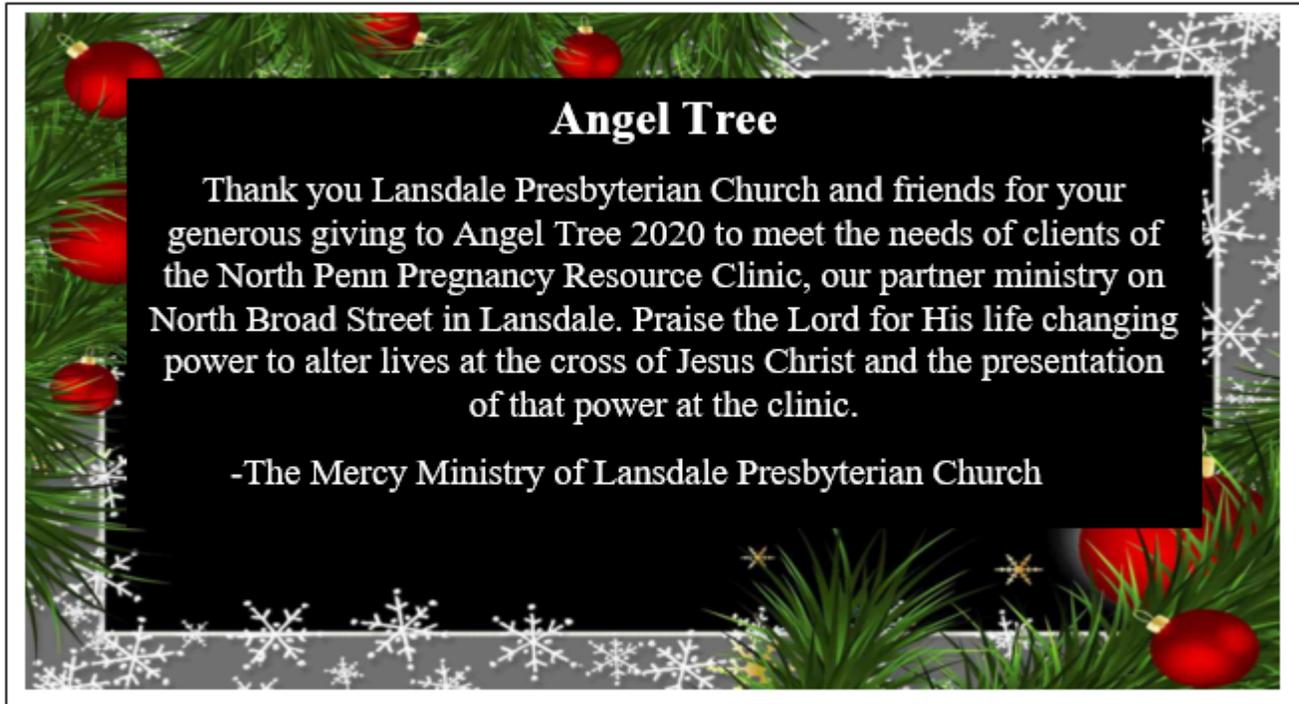
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Encourage...and Go

In the year ahead let's commit ourselves to cultivating the gift of encouragement. Some of us are naturally gifted encouragers, they exude encouragement. All of us are called to encourage and can commit to it. Make a calendar reminder if it helps. Commit to encourage one person every day. Maybe that's someone in your family, or perhaps you could branch out and determine that at least once a week you will encourage someone outside your family. A phone call, an email, text...maybe even a hand-written note; these can all be powerful opportunities to change a person's outlook on the day. You could commit to encouraging one person you see at church each week or, perhaps more needed, someone you didn't see at church that week.

Encouragement can be as simple as telling someone you were thinking of them or appreciate them. But we can take encouragement a bit further by telling someone we were praying for them and/or sharing a bit of Scripture; allowing God's Word to speak into their life. Here, there is opportunity to "Go" because literally everyone you know has faced trial in the last year and needs the perspective of God's promises, his faithfulness and the hope of the gospel.

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."



Save the DATE!

LPC Mission Conference
March 5 – 7

with **Harold & Sarah**

Watch for more details to come!

MOMS
TOGETHER

February 8, 7 – 9 pm
Regular monthly meeting in the gym

February 19, 7 - 9 pm
Special Moms Together Event –
Watch for details!

Help save a life. BLOOD DRIVE HERE



You can make a difference.

Coming in March!

2020 will be remembered for many things but one of the good things that came from 2020 was that LPC began to host blood drives for the Red Cross again. We planned for two drives, but due to the shortage of blood we added additional dates for a total of four drives where we collected 137 units for the year. This allowed our members to have an impact in the community and allowed the community to come through our doors to join us. Our willingness to provide a site for the Red Cross earned LPC the "Premier Partner" status.

For 2021 we have two blood drives planned. The first one is coming on **March 3rd** and will run from 2pm to 7pm. Lord willing, we plan to schedule the blood drives on the first Wednesday of March and October each year.

We're looking for donors and volunteers so mark your calendar and keep an eye out for an email providing details and web links to sign-up (<http://www.lansdalepres.org/BloodDrive.html>). Our prayer is that through these blood drives, we can serve our community and show that we care for our neighbors and in doing so honor Christ and grow His Kingdom. We hope you can join us.

Dave, Marilyn, and Phil
The Blood Drive Committee

December 2020 Special Offerings

The Sacrificial Offering for 2020 was designated for Christ Academy of Philadelphia and The Pregnancy Resource Clinic/North Care of Lansdale. Because of your generous giving, we collected \$22,412.26 which was then split between the two organizations.

From Lee Patkos, Executive Director of the Pregnancy Resource Clinic: *"Thank you so much for caring for our clients! I have been greatly humbled by your steadfast support during a year when you could have forgotten us in the midst of your own crisis....We have felt more firmly held in your support than ever before!"*

Each year we take a special offering on Christmas Eve for PCA Retirement & Benefits Ministerial Relief which has been providing widows, retired pastors, and PCA church servants in need with financial, spiritual, and emotional help since 1973. The amount of the offering collected and given to this ministry was \$2,905.00.

From a widow of a retired pastor: *"Words can never express our appreciation and gratitude for all you have done for us. We would have literally been on the streets if it wasn't for the support you have given to us. God bless you a hundredfold."*

FEBRUARY

- 2 7:00 pm Christian Ed. Board meeting
7:00 pm Finance Committee meeting online
- 3 6:00 am Men's Ministry in-person and online *
6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal in-person *
- 4 10:00 am Ladies Bible study in-person/online *
7:00 pm Session meeting online
7:00 pm Ladies Bible study online *
- 5 10:30 am Friday Small Group online *
- 7 8:00 am Band Rehearsal *
9:15 am Sunday School in-person and online*
10:30 am Worship Service in-person and live
streamed *
- Rev. Tom Keane preaching
- Communion
- Lunch and meeting following the service
No evening groups meeting
- 8 7:00 pm Moms Together in-person and online
- 14 5:00 pm Small Group online (Halvorsen) *
5:30 pm Youth Group in-person *
5:30 pm Small Group in-person (McBride) *
6:30 pm Small Group online (Berg) *
- 15 7:00 pm Deacons' Mercy Ministry meeting
- 18 7:00 pm Session meeting
- 19 7:00 pm Moms Together Event
- 24 7:00 pm Moms Together Committee meeting
- 27 12-4 pm Session planning meeting online
- 28 10:30 am Worship Service *
- Rev. Brian Hand preaching

* Meets weekly

Special Schedule ~ February 7

- 9:15 am Sunday School
- 10:30 am Worship Service
- Rev. Tom Keane preaching
- Communion
- 11:45 am Boxed Lunch
- 1:00 pm Congregational meeting

No evening groups or meetings



Happy Birthday To....

- 1 Cathy Keane
Irene Tchimos
Scott Wilson
- 2 Ron Stotish
- 3 Amber Etherton
Krista Hathaway
- 5 Alex Halvorsen
- 8 Emme Gray
Lydia Keane
Valerie Liggett
- 9 Charis Whitney
- 12 Billy Bech
- 13 Bill Bech
- 14 Jenn Gray
Deb Negley
- 15 Anita Schwartz
- 18 Sarah Prall
Rachel Weinstein
Brian Witner
- 22 Genevieve Hand
Danillo Santos
- 23 Aurora Reale
- 25 Beth Burkholder
- 26 Brynn Koch
- 28 Mason Adams



Happy Anniversary

Ari & Ellen Koudis
2/26