



**THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF LAMBERTVILLE  
First Presbyterian Church**

**Many voices with one faith, one heart.  
One family under God.**

## **From Our Elder ~ Heather McIntyre**

### **God's Perfect Plan**

Nothing makes it feel more like Christmas than listening to Christmas music. We like to start early to enjoy the magic of Christmas for as long as possible. We were having a conversation about our top ten Christmas carols while listening to *Mary Did You Know*, which sparked an interesting comment from my teenagers.

“If Mary said she was pregnant as a virgin today, nobody would believe her.”

My immediate answer was “people didn’t believe her back then either.”

It’s easy to lose perspective. We believe in the Bible without question. We don’t stop to think about why God did many things... or if we do, we look at the big picture but not the details. We recognize the significance of Jesus being born of the Virgin Mary but we don’t take time to think of Mary, a pregnant teenager, not yet married, barely old enough to understand the significance of having a child, let alone the son of God, who was sent to save us all.

We don’t know much about Mary. We don’t know if she tried to hide her pregnancy, we don’t know about the reaction of her parents or friends. We know the details that God chose to share with us. We know that after an angel visited both Mary and Joseph, they had faith in God.

God could have chosen a noble family, a family with means. He could have chosen an older woman, a righteous woman who could properly care for an infant. He could have chosen an experienced mother, a woman who had been widowed, he could have chosen anyone. He could have chosen a woman like Sarah, who was too old to give birth to a baby. But he chose Mary, a girl, maybe 14 years old, who had no idea that she was being given the most important job in the history of all mankind. She was being tasked with giving birth to the most fragile tiny Lord of All. She was responsible to keep baby Jesus safe and alive.

It was not uncommon for young girls to be married and start families as teenagers. But surely those births were risky, for mother and child. Surely without proper medical care, those young mothers faced daunting odds. And if that’s not scary enough, add in a nice long donkey ride from Nazareth to Bethlehem... four long days of traveling in what had to be uncomfortable, to say the least.

Why are these details significant? Why does it matter that our Lord and Savior was born in a stable, not in a medical facility or even a proper home? In those days, home births were common and midwives often helped with those births... but surely most babies were not born in a stable, laid in a manger meant to feed the farm animals. And why was Jesus born in Bethlehem, a small insignificant town?

Why did God choose a poor young couple of no means, to birth Jesus in the most insignificant place, in the most humble birth imaginable. I’m not sure that Hollywood could have scripted a better rags to riches story... There was no silver spoon, Jesus was the ultimate underdog.



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### *God's Perfect Plan Continued...*

The Bible doesn't breakdown the choices behind the story of Jesus's birth. We know that God, is a God of wisdom. When the miracles of Jesus are doubted (later in life), Jesus chooses to wait several days to raise Lazarus from the dead. In fact, he waits until after Lazarus is buried. There was no question that Lazarus was dead, not close to dead, all the way dead.

It seems as though the story of Jesus's birth has a similar theme. Jesus had no advantages. In fact, he had every disadvantage. No one could claim that he was blessed by noble birth or privileged in life. While much of his life is not recorded in the Bible, it is known that he worked as a carpenter, or more likely a laborer like his father. He did not have an easy path.

It is easy to romanticize the Christmas story. Even as Christians, we sing carols, we bake cookies, we set up nativities and decorate with festive lights. We remember that Jesus is the Reason for the Season. But do we see a scared teenager, who traveled for days by donkey, to give birth in the area where animals are kept? Do we recognize that much of the world didn't believe her or just didn't care... there was no fanfare. Sure, Mary is famous now, but back then she was just a teenager being dealt a difficult hand, with possibly the most significant job in history. If she had failed at her job, the fate of the world would be much different. Her faith in God and her success as Jesus's mother give us eternal hope.

How big is our God that he trusted a fearfully, wonderfully made teenager with the fate of humanity? For those of us who like to worry about all the things that could go wrong, this story is full of reasons to worry. But God's plan is perfect, even when it seems scary. God has made us all for a purpose and he knows that we are up to the challenge. It is easy to allow fear to speak more loudly than faith. It's easy to think that our challenges are more significant, our fears are more founded. But next time we are struggling to trust God, think back to the scared teenager who trusted a plan that only God could pull off. Don't think of all the things that you can't do, instead remember that there is nothing that God can't do.



## “From the Office”

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!**

Thank you to all the Bell Choir Members, they are a very dedicated group, and they are very much appreciated.

There is no January Newsletter. The Annual Report Submissions are due to the Church Office by the end of January. If you have done a report in the past, please send one in.

Sue




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## Church News:



Friday December 6 and Saturday December 7th Riverside Symphonia are in the Sanctuary. Their concert is on Saturday at 8:00 pm.

Communion Sunday is December 8th at Mt. Airy Presbyterian and January 3rd here at First Pres. in Lambertville. The Services will be starting at 10:00 am.

The Ladies' will be having a Christmas Gathering on Monday December 9th at 6:30 pm in the Library. Please bring an appetizer, side dish or dessert to share. There will also be a guest speaker.

The Ladies Bible Study is continuing on Wednesdays, 2:00 pm in the Church Library. There will be no Ladies' Bible Study on Wednesday December 24th or January 1st.

The Spanish Ministry will be meeting on Sundays at 3:00 pm

Roller Skating for Youth up to 6th Grade for the month of December is 12/6 & 12/13. Then will be resuming on January 3, 2025, at 6:00 pm in the gym.

**Our Christmas Eve and Candlelight Service is on December 24th at 4:00 pm.**

You may take your poinsettia home after the Worship Service on Sunday December 29th.

JOIN US FOR OUR

*Women's Christmas Gathering*

IN CELEBRATING THE BIRTH  
OF OUR JESUS CHRIST!

GUEST SPEAKER, SINGING,  
FELLOWSHIP, AND DELICIOUS FOOD

COFFEE AND TEA WILL BE PROVIDED

PLEASE BRING AN HORS D'OEUVRE,  
SIDE DISH OR A DESSERT TO SHARE

9TH  
MONDAY  
DECEMBER 2024

6:30 PM  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
LAMBERTVILLE, NJ

ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH AT 609-397-0650

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

- **This year we've completed 22 shoeboxes, plus additional financial donations toward the outreach.**

I know I say this every year, but your generosity is greatly appreciated in helping this Samaritan's Purse Christmas event.

Not only do our brothers and sisters here at church participate, but there are also some from the local community that faithfully fill boxes.

Every year, Operation Christmas Child grows in it's outreach worldwide. The children, their families and communities experience God's love and blessings.

Thank you for helping to share the gift of Jesus.

**Joanne DiBlasi**



## Ministry and Outreach:

### News From Your Missions Team~

Please see the Bulletin Board in the back of the Sanctuary!

Your Missions Team:

Addie Andino, Gail Armitage, Russ Topping and Donna Zambella

### Deacon's Corner.....

Hello everyone it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas and the Deacons turn into elves every year at this time. We reach out to many members of our church family young and older. First I want to thank everyone again who came out and help make our Bake sale such a great success. With such sadness this Summer during hurricane season First Presbyterian Church did its part by helping those in need. Coming up we will be helping LaNelle Gallagher with the ladies tea. We also were there to reach out to members of our church family who suffered their own sadness. Remember that we are just a phone call away for prayer and any help we can give. We will be assisting once again with the Christmas Eve service. Helping Heather P. with the Soup Sale yummy! I would like also to thank those church members young and older who help us during our regular services when needed. Many of us wear multiple hats.

### Merry Christmas!

LaNelle, Terry, Heather, Dana, Jennifer and Heidi

*“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

***Luke 2:8-11 NIV***



December Birthdays

2 Brent Pursell  
4 Carol Griffiths  
5 Meg McIntyre  
14 Brittany Shurts  
18 Sandra Parker  
19 Jacob Pursell  
23 Daniel Fisher  
23 Chuck Robertson  
27 Heidi Danberry  
27 Levi Stratuik  
30 Caitlin Stratuik

January Birthdays

7 Andrew Zambella  
11 Sarah McIntyre  
12 JoAnn Serlenga  
14 Dana Garrenger  
25 Alan Durborow, Jr.  
26 LaNelle Gallagher  
30 Erin Durborow



Just for Kids.....

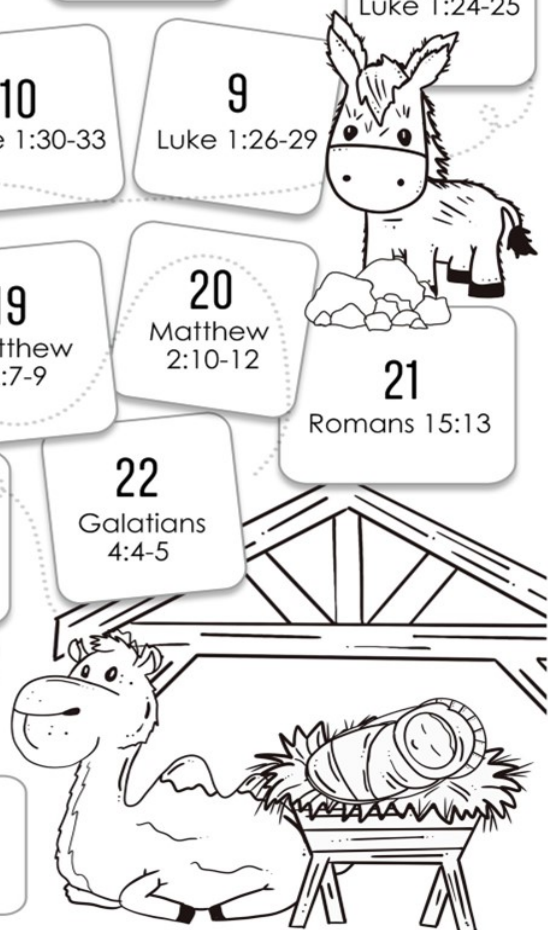


# A CHRIST-CENTERED CHRISTMAS ADVENT READING PLAN



Explore the true meaning of Christmas as you travel through God's Word. Discover God's promises he fulfilled through the birth of His only Son, the **KING OF KINGS.**

|                       |                          |                     |                     |                       |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1<br>Isaiah 7:14      | 2<br>Isaiah 9:6-7        | 3<br>Malachi 3:1    | 4<br>Micah 5:2-4    | 5<br>Luke 1:5-7       | 6<br>Luke 1:10-15     | 7<br>Luke 1:18-22  |
| 8<br>Luke 1:24-25     | 9<br>Luke 1:26-29        | 10<br>Luke 1:30-33  | 11<br>Luke 2:1-5    | 12<br>Luke 2:6-7      | 13<br>Luke 2:8-14     | 14<br>Luke 2:15-20 |
| 15<br>Matthew 1:18-21 | 16<br>Matthew 1:22-25    | 17<br>Matthew 2:1-3 | 18<br>Matthew 2:4-6 | 19<br>Matthew 2:7-9   | 20<br>Matthew 2:10-12 | 21<br>Romans 15:13 |
| 22<br>Galatians 4:4-5 | 23<br>Philippians 2:8-11 | 24<br>James 1:16-18 | 25<br>John 3:16     | 26<br>Matthew 2:13-15 |                       |                    |





## **December Assisting Schedules:**

### **Elder Schedule**

12/1- Pat Durborow

**12/8- @ Mt. Airy for Communion**

12/15- Phil McCloughan

12/22- Don Pidcock

12/29- Karen Thatcher

### **Deacon Schedule**

12/1- Jen Chernoski

**12/8- @ Mt. Airy for Communion**

12/15- Heather Pursell

12/22- Terry Peck

12/29- Heidi Danberry

### **Greeting Schedule**

12/1- Carol Griffiths

**12/8- @ Mt. Airy for Communion**

12/15- Children's Pageant

12/22- Joan Yannarella

12/29- Sue McCloughan

**Please see the upcoming bulletins for the January Assisting Schedules.**

**If you unable to serve your scheduled dates,  
please find a replacement and contact the church office.**

**Schedules are subject to change**

**Thank you!**

**Session Minutes**  
**First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville**  
**Westminster House**  
**October 21, 2024, 7:00 PM**

**Class of 2025**

Joanne DiBlasi  
 Heather McIntyre

**Class of 2026**

Pat Durborow  
 Phil McCloughan

**Class of 2027**

Don Pidcock  
 Karen Thatcher

Rev. Linda Gaden, Moderator

Susan McCloughan, Clerk of Session

**Present:** Joanne DiBlasi, Pat Durborow, Phil McCloughan, Don Pidcock,  
 Karen Thatcher and Rev. Linda Gaden

**Excused:** Heather McIntyre

**Welcome:** Reverend Gaden, declaring a quorum, welcomed all to the  
 October 21, 2024 Session Business Meeting and opened in prayer.

**7:00 PM-Devotion, Karen Thatcher**

Karen spoke about Joel and what has been going on in his life the past few months. Process in the mind, prayer and worry are together. Karen read from *Psalm 39:12-13* and how God knew us before we were thought of or born.

He gave us abilities, and that God has a plan for all of us. Jesus answers the crying people's hearts, even if they are empty. When feeling overwhelmed, God's love gives us hope. There is a thirst out there and those are looking to the church to what we do and say. We as a church should always pray for those that need us. Amen.

**Moderator Time** - Pastor Linda Gaden

All went around the room and shared their concerns.

**Clerks Correspondence and Session Mail Box** - Susan McCloughan

**Review of Minutes:** A **motion** was called to approve the Annual Report Minutes from February 26, 2024. All were in favor. Another motion was called to approve the minutes from September 23, 2024. All were in favor.

**Mail Box/Clerk Correspondence-** Lisa B. from the Hunterdon County Dept. of Public Health inspected the church kitchen on 10/9/24, and we have received the Satisfactory Certificate. We have received the Inspection

Certificate and the Certificate of Registration from the City of Lambertville Fire Prevention, and both will be posted in the gym. The picture arrived from Ginny Pickles regarding Mary Mac Kubbin and it was shared at the meeting. A description of the picture will go with it, when it is hung in the church. Steve Emery did come out and tune the organ on 10/17. He did report issues with it, but these will be addressed once the church roof is completed. The LBL will be using the gym for their games from Monday December 2, 2024 through Saturday March 15, 2025. Jim Troutman has sent in the Facility Use Agreement.

There was a husband and wife who were from Israel walking by the church and saw the poster “Remembering October 7”, he thanked our church for having the service on October 6<sup>th</sup> to remember October 7<sup>th</sup>, and for our prayers.

**Clerk of Session Workshop October 2024-** This was a Zoom meeting held by the Presbytery. Many items were discussed-some examples were: The General Assembly of the Presbytery that met in June-July 2024. Kate Trigger-Duffert (GA Planner) spoke about the meeting and there were some changes to the Book of Order. When they are available, we will get the information from our Stated Clerk, Steve Shussett. During the meeting, Boundary Training and Anti-Racism Policy were discussed. I was able to print those handouts, and they were given out during the Session Meeting. More to follow on the new policies. They also spoke about Background Checks for those who work with children in the church.

**Discernment Process-** The Session is continuing to review the “Turn the Page” documents that were handed out previously in regards to looking for a new Pastor. Session discussed the possible dates of 11/25/24, 1/13 & 1/27/25 to meet with Jeanne Radak our Presbytery Leader, and Mt. Airy. Sue will reach out to Jeanne with the dates and ask that she contact Mt. Airy and get back to me on which dates will work.

### **Calendar Highlights from November 2024-January 2025**

Communion is scheduled on Veterans’ Sunday Nov. 3, with Pastor Gregory. Mt. Airy will be joining us. The information will be in the bulletins for who is scheduled to give the upcoming Sermons and our Accompanists. The Ladies’ Bible Study will be continuing on Wednesdays. The Session Prayer Meetings will take place on Nov. 4, Dec. 2, and January 6. Spanish Ministry will be continuing to meet at our church on Sundays at 3:00 pm. Riverside Symphonia are here for concerts on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>. The Bell Choir is starting back on 11/7. Skating for the Youth starts on Friday Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Lambertville Elks is holding their Hoop Shoot in the gym on Sat. 12/7. The Ladies’ Christmas Gathering is Monday 12/9 at 6:30 pm. Children’s Christmas Pageant is Sunday 12/15, Jen Chernoski will be organizing the pageant. On 12/24 Christmas Eve, the Service is at 4:00 pm and will also include the Candlelight Service. **The Annual Reports are due to the Church Office starting the week of January 6<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Worship and Music/Church Life** – Joanne DiBlasi/Karen Thatcher

**Insurance Review-** We have received our Certificate of Liability Insurance from the CRISP Agency (formally the Duryea Agency), and Karen discussed it with Session. The certificate is on file in the Church Office.

**Young Adult Time-** This is happening when there are young adults at the church service.

**Accompanist/Music Director-** Lucia will discuss with Karen what the Music Director job entails. Sue will be continuing to direct the Bell Choir. Adri B. has accepted a position with another church. Thank you to Stephen, George, Ariana, Hilary and Lucia for being our regular accompanists. Karen would also like the Music Director to work with the children in the pageant. Also, for Stephen more involved in playing for the Children’s Sunday School.

**Spanish Ministry-** Joanne spoke about this and the Spanish Ministry is meeting here on Sundays at 3:00 pm. More people have been attending. Francesca would like to be here on Halloween evening to have her group pray.

**Joint Services-** Three churches participated in the July Joint Communion Service at Holcombe-Jimison. Pastor Gregory expressed that he will not be able to participate next year.

### **Building and Grounds** – Pat Durborow/Phil McCloughan/Don Pidcock

The **new technology** for the Livestream is working, but Sue will need to get in touch with Comcast to find out if we will need another router in the Sanctuary, because the service has been spotty. Phil asked if Stephen would be able to put our bulletin up on the Livestream so it is there during the service.

**Church Organ-** Discussed earlier. The organ will look to be repaired after the church roof is completed.

**Church Roof-** Phil met with Rainmaster, but we will need to give them a deposit before the work gets started. He will check with Rainmaster to see on getting the necessary permits. We will also need snow guards on the roof. Phil did let Eiseman Roofing know that we were going with another company, and he thanked them for their time. We will be getting a metal roof and we will updating our gutter system. More details to come.

**Skating-** Was discussed earlier.

**Martinez Landscaping-** Pat received the estimate from Martinez and he gave us a price of restoning of the wall at the end of the gym. The wall is falling over at this point. The estimate is \$5331.00. A **motion** was called to replace the wall. All were in favor.

**Hallway in Church/Bathrooms/Front Door Issues-** The church hallway and bathrooms were not discussed tonight. Addie scraped and primed above the outside front doors. LaNelle will redo the church sign hanging above the front doors in the spring. Phil talked about draining the pipes on the kitchen side of the building, so they don't freeze.

**Church Heaters/Monthly Fire Inspections-** The heaters are going to be serviced by Garden State sometime around October 24<sup>th</sup>. Don has been doing the monthly checks on the smoke detectors and Exit Signs.

**Pastor Search Committee-** Karen and Sue will meet to go through the application for Princeton Seminary, it will be completed and sent to Session before sending the application into Princeton.

**Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Highlands-** Phil would like to attend the following Zoom workshops for the Presbytery: 11/2-Financial Workshop, 11/4- Anti-Racism, 11/7-Creating a Culture of Change and 11/12- The Stated Presbytery Meeting. He would like to see in which direction that our Presbytery is going.

### **Budget and Finance** – Don Pidcock

**The Year-to-Date Summary-** Wasn't discussed this evening.

**Lowell Hunter Estate and Per Capita-** Were not discussed.

**Church Giving-** Don expressed an interest in the church getting either Venmo or a QR Code so that we can receive monetary donations. It was mentioned that we already have online giving with Subsplash, and is on the Church Website. More information to follow.

**Boy Scouts-** Don spoke with Porter Little from the Boy Scouts and he will meet with him tomorrow night, 10/22.

**Dominican Republic Mission Trip-** Don and members of our church along with Crystal and Chuck and members of their church will be leaving for the DR on 10/26 and returning on 11/2. We have received a lot of donations for the trip. Don thanked us for all the donations and for our prayers.

**The LPS using the gym-** Karen will reach out and text Heather to see if LPS had sent in their last check.

**Sunday School/Junior Deacons** – Joanne DiBlasi/Don Pidcock

The Children's Sunday School begins on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Adult Sunday School has been going well. Jr. Deacons- Were not discussed tonight.

**Missions** – Joanne DiBlasi

Addie got in touch with Heather M., regarding a refund from the church account when Missions sent in a donation to Samaritan's Purse.

**Notations**

**Holy Communion-** Was on Sunday October 6, which was Worldwide Communion Sunday.

**Sight & Sound-** The trip to Lancaster, PA., will be on 11/8/2025, and the show is "Noah." Karen has gotten 50 tickets, and a sign-up will be coming soon. Also included in the price is the buffet at Bird-in-Hand and the bus ticket. Addie is working on getting the bus.

**The Annual Lambertville House Tour-** Is coming up on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Our church doors will be open and we will be having tours. Historical Highlights will be given out. There is also a bake sale to raise monies for Samaritan's Purse/Hurricane Relief. Signage will be outside of the Church.

**Lambertville Chamber of Commerce-** Phil asked if we can join the COC. Sue will reach out to them to see what information is needed and get back to Session.

**Continuing of Education-** Elders are encouraged to continue in and share the word of God through reading His Word, devotions, prayer and to be involved in education.

**Elders-**Are to continue Pastoral Care as needed.

**Prayer Meetings-** Will be held on the first Monday of each month. Members will be sharing His Word through readings, thoughts, scripture and prayer, and will be in person. For those who cannot make in person, a livestream will be available. If for personal reasons keep session members from attending, the session resolved to pray wherever they are during the 7 o'clock hour.

**Session Moderator-** Pastor Gaden's last Session Meeting with us is December 16, 2024. Another Moderator will be appointed by the Presbytery for January. Thank you Linda, for your time with us!

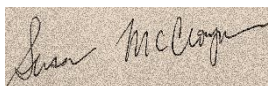
**Session Devotion Rotation-** For November-the Joint Session/Deacon Meeting is Pastor Linda Gaden, December is Don Pidcock, and January 2025 is Joanne DiBlasi.

Don Pidcock.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm and was closed in Session prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,



Susan McCloughan  
Clerk of Session