

# “THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

*Monthly Newsletter*  
**DECEMBER 2023**

*“<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>12</sup> the Lord.” Luke 2:10-11*

## **PASTOR’S MESSAGE:**

### **What is Advent?**

What is Advent and why is it important? There is certainly enough going on with Christmas preparations that we do not need one more thing to do in December. But Advent isn't a thing you do. Expressions of Advent help give you the right approach to enter a season of gift-giving and family events **AND** keep your heart and mind aligned with - dare we say it, ***“the reason for the season.”***

Here is your church history lesson. “Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. It's like the church season of Lent that leads up to the celebration of Easter. It provides for a time of preparation so you can truly celebrate ***the big thing***.

So what is that big thing? The Nativity of the Lord on Christmas Day. God sent Jesus as a gift to humanity to live an earthly life. This is called the incarnation (meaning - put on flesh). It's a big deal because it makes God enter into our world in a real way.

As Christian believers you don't have a distant God in a far-off place - you have God that has come to be with you. This gives us a whole additional way to understand and relate to God - through the earthly life of Jesus. By sharing this understanding with your family, you are allowing them to claim this personal relationship - **GOD IS WITH US** - Jesus lived a life just as we are living today and can relate with to us in whatever we are going through



*From: Beyond Sunday Advent*

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES:** On Sunday, December 24, 2023 we will have our regular 10:00 am worship service. Our Christmas Eve service is at 8pm. There will be no Christmas Day Service.

**SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER:**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>*ELDER-IN-CHARGE</u>	<u>*LAY LEADER</u>	<u>COMMUNION</u>
Dec. 3	Irene Schoenwalder	Diane Smith	Irene S. & Diane S.
Dec. 10	Marty Lindner	Lisa Heims	
Dec. 17	Marty Lindner	Cynthia Manno	
Dec. 24	Linda Zehner	Cynthia Manno	
Dec. 31	Janet Sangekar	Lynn Bailey	
Jan. 7	Carol Gordon	Lisa Heims	Carol G. & Lisa H.
Jan. 14	Karen Brelowski	Kathy Kreie	
Jan. 21	Janet Sangekar	Irene Schoenwalder	
Jan. 28	Irene Schoenwalder	Karen Brelowski	

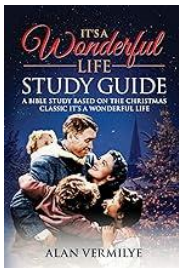


**\* If you are unable to be Elder-in-Charge or Lay Leader for your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone and inform Pastor Ron. If you switch a month or more in advance, please also contact Cecelia, so the Sunday assignments can be listed correctly in the following month's newsletter. Please give yourself enough time to set up prior to worship, 30 minutes is suggested.**

**COFFEE HOUR:** Volunteers are needed to bring baked goods for Coffee Hour on Sunday mornings after worship. There is a sign-up sheet in the kitchen. If you have any questions, you may contact Linda Zehner.



Dec. 3	Ruth Ammerman	Jan. 7
Dec. 10	Marie Lindner	Jan. 14
Dec. 17	Bill Jensen	Jan. 21
Dec. 24	Diane Smith	Jan. 28



**TOWNLEY WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY**

For the holiday season we are having a Bible Study based on the Christmas Classic *It's A Wonderful Life*. We are meeting in Bailey Hall on Wednesday at 12:00 noon.



**TOYS FOR TOTS:** We are supporting the local Toys for Tots program. You can brighten a child's Christmas by donating a new, unwrapped toy(s). Please bring your donation to church through **Sunday, December 10th**. A box will be available for you to leave your donated toys.



**GIFT A SENIOR:** Holiday time is often a lonely one for seniors, particularly for those confined to nursing homes. We're going to spread some love and holiday warmth this holiday season by sending holiday gift bags to senior residents at AristaCare and also a food bank that supports a community of seniors. A monetary donation basket will be available in the coming Sundays for those who would like to support this effort.

**CHRISTMAS GALA SHOW:** A special Christmas Musical Extravaganza “**Sounds of the Season**”, a free concert open to the community will be held on **Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary**. The concert will feature many performers from Townley and by professional musical performers we all know and love. The sanctuary will be decorated, and the “stage” will have special lighting and some amazing effects. The Gateway YMCA Children’s Summer Day Camp Program will be the charity receiving donations. Invite your family, friends and neighbors!

*Christmas Party*



**CHRISTMAS PARTY:** This year’s Christmas Party will be held on **Saturday, December 9, 2023**, at 5:00 PM. Cost is \$40 per person. Lisa Heims and Kathy Kreie are currently taking reservations. Only 50 reservations may be taken. Due to popular demand, it will again be held at La Casa Di Martino. 301 West Clay Avenue, Roselle Park, NJ 07204.

**POINSETTIA SALE:** Poinsettia plants are \$20.00 each. Please see the attached order form. Orders are due by **Sunday, December 17, 2023** to Diane Smith or Janet Sangekar.



**NURSING HOME VISITATION:** Our nursing home ministry has been resumed at AristaCare, located at 400 W. Stimpson Avenue in Linden on the **second Sunday** at 2:00pm of each month. Please see Pastor Ron if interested in being a part of this ministry.

**SESSION MEETING:** The next session meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 20, 2023** at 7:30 pm in the upstairs meeting room. (Session meetings are usually held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.)

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN:**

Townley Church needs help to fund several significant repairs. We appreciate your donations to our “**Cherish The Church**” Capital Improvement Campaign.



DONATE TO HELP RENOVATE



**Help Us Reach Our Goal !**



Online



Locally

Donations are tax deductible

**NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER:**

Our Cherish the Church Fund amount is \$18,885. We are not only getting donations from our congregation but also from friends of Townley. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in 18 months (June 2024). These funds are to be used for our capital improvements. A red mailbox to accept donations and a thermometer to track progress are in Bailey Hall. Special envelopes,

designed by Kathy Kreie, are next to the mailbox. Thank you to all who have donated so far to help us reach our goal! Have you looked up at our steeple lately? It looks beautiful with its new windows and siding which was done by T-Mobile at no cost to the church. The work in the chapel is completed. It looks lovely. Stop by and look at it on a Sunday morning. The paving of the parking lot is completed and the stripes are painted.

The budget committee met to prepare next year’s budget. A thank you to all our members and friends who supported the mission and ministry of Townley through their generosity. Thank you, Janet, Church Treasurer



**Please remember the Connecticut Farms Food Pantry.** You are encouraged to support this ministry with a monthly donation of \$4.00 (just \$1.00 a week). The food bank prefers a monetary donation so they can purchase what is needed.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** If you have any items you would like to have included in January's (monthly) newsletter, please e-mail them to [CeceliaH@comcast.net](mailto:CeceliaH@comcast.net).



**THE PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY:** The next meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:30 pm. Website <https://pnenj.org>

### **SESSION WORKS**



“Session Works” is a monthly communication of significant decisions made by Townley Session. From November’s meeting, the following items were approved/discussed:

- Leave of absence approved for Marty Lindner
- Rally Day learnings discussed
- Approved collecting Toys for Tots this with Westfield PD
- Task Force Planning Calendars issued for 2024

Please note that you do not have to be on Session to work on a committee. Your talents are needed.

**WE HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE!** “Like” our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/TownleyChurch>) to get the latest updates on your wall. Share your Townley comments, photos and videos. If you want pictures added or notices posted, please send an email to the church office ([townleychurch@yahoo.com](mailto:townleychurch@yahoo.com)). Away or missed a service? Catch our Livestream!



**GIVING TO TOWNLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:** You can also support our church using your credit or debit card by using this QR Code or by clicking the “Give Now” button on our church website at [www.townleychurch.org](http://www.townleychurch.org).

### **REGARDING RULING ELDERS: A MONTHLY SERIES FOR SERVING FAITHFULLY**

***Supporting the Ministry of the Church through the Giving of Money, Time, and Talents  
by Marissa Galvan-Valle – November 15, 2023***



One of the first things that I heard about stewardship when I was a child in church was the classic and catchy definition of the three t's that I later learned worked even in English: time, talent, and treasure (*tiempo, talento, y tesoro* in Spanish). This was a way to think about stewardship not just in connection to material things, but also as a discipline that encompassed our whole commitment as Christians to God and to the church. We were challenged to consider: How much time do I commit to church through my participation and leadership? How do I use my talents

and skills to serve God? How do I support the ministry and mission of the church through my treasure or financial support?

The *Book of Order* states that we bear witness to God's love and grace as we become involved in the ministry of Christ's church, "supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents" (G-1.0304). We support the ministry of the church not as an obligation, to get a say on what happens, or to obtain favor with God, but as a way of witnessing God's love and grace through our response of gratitude. Through the words of 2 Corinthians 5:18, our gratitude recognizes that "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ." It is important that we connect God's love and grace to supporting the church's ministry. As Karl Barth famously states in *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, "*Charis* always demands the answer of *eucharistia*. Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo. Gratitude follows grace like thunder lightning."

How do you, as a ruling elder, invite your congregation to understand God's grace in such a way that it elicits a response of gratitude through the giving of money, time, and talents? We may need to go back to the very beginning. In our PC(USA) curriculum *Big God, Big Questions: Confirmation for a Growing Faith*, the way that grace is explained is that it is "love that God gives to us, not because we have earned it, but because God loves us despite our mistakes. Grace is a love bigger than we can imagine." It is God's patient and kind love for us that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." God's love never ends. We can love others because we have experienced God's love through our salvation and through God's creation. We love because God first, and so completely, loved us. Our love is our response of gratitude. As we practice love and grace, we grow in our ability to live gratefully, recognizing God's grace at work in our lives and the lives of others.

Maybe then, as we think about the three t's of stewardship, we might substitute the original wording and think about stewardship as thankfulness, thankfulness, and more thankfulness. This would move the congregations' motivation to give from the church's expenses to a faith practice of loving God and loving others through their expressed gratitude. We are grateful to God for God's love and salvation and give with joy and praise. As a ruling elder, you are grateful for the gifts that are given and you express your appreciation and care with intentionality. All of these expressions of gratitude are part of the life of the church. Every gift is important. No gift is too small. Children may give their coins, help in various parts of worship, and participate in faith formation programming. Youth may assist and participate in church ministries, give to special campaigns that involve those things that they believe in, and spend time with younger members. Adults may participate in committees, find ways that help them express their thankfulness to God, and be open to the Spirit about other ways they can contribute and be faithful stewards of what God has given them.

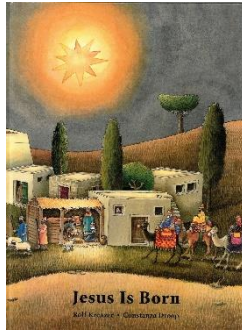
Grace and gratitude are the core of stewardship.

*Marissa Galván-Valle is a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She is the senior editor for Spanish Language Resources in the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and temporary pastor at Beechmont Presbyterian Church, an intercultural church that worships each Sunday in Spanish and English. She was ordained as a ruling elder when she was 21 years old.*

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# What Christmas Is About

By Lenora McWhorter



The prophets announced Christ's birth  
that He would one day come to earth.  
He was sent by the Father to pay a price,  
and He became the living sacrifice.

God took a good look across the land,  
but sadly enough He found no man.  
Not one was righteous that could die  
for sinful souls such as you and I.

So God Himself had a perfect plan,  
and because of His great love for man,  
God became flesh and came to earth  
to die for mankind, to give us worth.

The sin debt was paid on the cross  
so all could be saved and none lost.  
Satan is defeated in the story we tell  
and Jesus became our Emmanuel.

Now Christmas comes to one and all  
to celebrate by those who answer the call.  
It's all about Him, the Lord Jesus Christ,  
who came to offer us the gift of life.

**2023 POINSETTIA SALE**



Qty \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia Plant(s) .....\$20.00 each

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Donated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas services and have a lovely poinsettia to take home following the Holiday. All plants left after the services will be distributed to the home bound.

Please put completed form with payment in the collection plate or give to Diane S. or Carol G. by Sunday, December 17, 2023.

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829 Salem Road  
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