

# THE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2011

## FROM THE PASTOR

Last week Tom and I saw the movie "Higher Ground," directed by and starring Vera Farmiga. The movie is based on Carolyn S. Brigg's memoir "This Dark World," which chronicles a thoughtful woman's struggles with faith and love. It was a good movie, and the main character's struggles with faith are beautifully done. But I would not recommend it for someone who is not a Christian, because it perpetuates a stereotype of Christians as insensitive, close-minded, and incapable of engaging in real dialogue.

The main character is torn between a life of unquestioning faith on the one hand, and art, thought and feeling on the other. The only character in the movie who is able to bring both worlds together is struck down by a brain tumor. I was longing for the main character to be able to visit our church and see another

option, one in which people are not required to repent simply for thinking independently.

Many people have no idea there is a viable alternative to narrow-minded faith. It's called liberal Christianity, where people can ask questions, explore feelings, entertain doubts and have faith, all at the same time. It's where people understand that not everything in the Bible is meant to be taken literally, where people respect scientific inquiry, take women seriously, view homosexuals as fellow human beings, and include corporate greed, environmental pollution, violence, oppression and war in their definition of sin. It's where we find God's will, not in the bad things that happen to us, but in those who respond with real help and healing.

My 23 year old daughter Zoey tells me most of friends believe that

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LEONIA**  
**181 FORT LEE ROAD, P.O. BOX 448**  
**LEONIA, NJ 07605**  
**TEL. 201 944-1358**  
**FAX. 201 944-6812**  
**WEBSITE WWW.LEONIAPRES.ORG**  
**EMAIL: SECRETARYLEONIA@YAHOO.COM**

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: TUES.-FRI.**  
**9 A.M. -12:30 P.M. & 1-2:30 P.M.**

Christians are backward and intolerant, and she often finds herself defending the Christian faith, even though she herself does not attend church. But she has a hard time convincing her friends that open-minded Christians actually exist. They have never met any that they know of, and have never considered

Continued page 2

## HEADLINERS

**JAZZ JAM SESSION—PLAYER OR AUDIENCE—EVERYONE WELCOME, See Page 5**

**ITALIAN PASTA DINNER NIGHT, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22ND See page 3 & flier enclosed**

**FEED THE HUNGRY, See Page 3**

**CAN YOU HELP AT THE HOLIDAY FAIR? Information on Page 2 & more on Page 5**

**IMPORTANT POST CARD ENCLOSED, PLEASE RETURN ASAP**

**From the Pastor** (Continued)

that a Christian might NOT believe that everyone else is going to burn in hell.

What can we do about this? Obviously no one who believes that all Christians are backward and intolerant is going to seek out a church to find meaning in life, or comfort and help in need. So we can't count on people coming to us, walking into our church so we can change their attitude and understanding. Somehow we have to bring the message out to the people, let the world know that people who love God and embrace Jesus don't have to be ignorant or close-minded.

But how do we do that? It's a challenge that all liberal Christians need to wrestle with. What can we say, what can we do, how can we get the message out, that following Christ is not about blind faith and smug judgments? Jesus challenges us to be all that we can be, to reach out and engage the world with love, to think deeply, listen with an open mind, give generously, and make known God's kingdom among us. How can we engage people in dialogue about this, and articulate our faith in a way that doesn't reinforce stereotypes?

This is not an easy challenge. I plan to address some of these issues in my sermons this fall. And for the next month or two the 9:30 adult Sunday School class will be reading and discussing a book called "What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be A Christian?: A guide to What Matters Most," by Martin Thielen. And you are all invited to join the discussion. This is a start. But the point is to take the message outside the church walls. May we explore together and work on this challenge, that the world will hear a more open, life-affirming and faithful message of the gospel.

Peace and Blessings,  
Rev. Debra Given

**COME, LET US WORSHIP GOD. . .**

- Sunday, October 9**                      **10:30 a.m.**  
Service for the Lord's Day and dedication of the restored stained glass windows
- Sunday, October 16**                    **10:30 a.m.**  
Service for the Lord's Day
- Sunday, October 23**                    **10:30 a.m.**  
Service for the Lord's Day
- Sunday, October 30**                    **10:30 a.m.**  
Reformation Sunday—Service for the Lord's Day
- Sunday, November 6**                  **10:30 a.m.**  
All Saints Day and the lighting of Candles of Remembrance

*Happy Birthday*

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| October 1  | Dima Drobikov    |
| October 2  | Pete Shanno      |
| October 3  | Luis Laboy       |
| October 9  | John Koepl       |
| October 27 | Francis Callahan |
|            | Stephanie Laboy  |
| October 29 | Leona Delany     |

*HOLIDAY FAIR*

The **HOLIDAY FAIR** Committee needs **YOU!** We need crafters, salespeople, cooks, strong muscled helpers, musicians, cleanup crews, dishwashers, waitresses, setup people and anyone else we've forgotten to mention. If you can help with any of the above positions, please let the church office know (that's Michele at 201-944-1358) or Karen Peters (201-592-8413 Jkkm142@aol.com). We want to make sure that everyone is involved in this major fundraiser for our church, plus we have fun! Plan to be there on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19.**



**FEED THE HUNGRY**— We receive food donations every **Sunday** and distribute them to either the **Center for Food Action** or **Loaves and Fishes**. The following frequently used staples are needed for Loaves and Fishes. Please place them in the basket in the front of the sanctuary:

Tomato soup, beef or chicken broth (preferably low sodium), canned vegetables (peas, cut string beans, corn, carrots) canned sliced fruits, apple sauce, beef gravy, pasta: orzo, elbow, rotini),

When shopping, remember to pick up extras and bring them with you on Sunday. Thank you.

### **CELEBRATE PLEDGE SUNDAY WITH US**

Add Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> to your busy calendar! On that day we will be receiving pledges and time and talents commitments to support our congregation and its mission. Our theme this year is *From God's Heart Through Our Hands*. Luke 12:48 says "From everyone to whom much is given, much will be required." The Mission and Stewardship Committee feels that we have indeed been blessed, and we challenge the members of our congregation to be as generous as possible. We look forward to hearing some personal testimonies during the pledge campaign. So, plan on sharing some fellowship after worship on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and share our joy as we tally up the results!

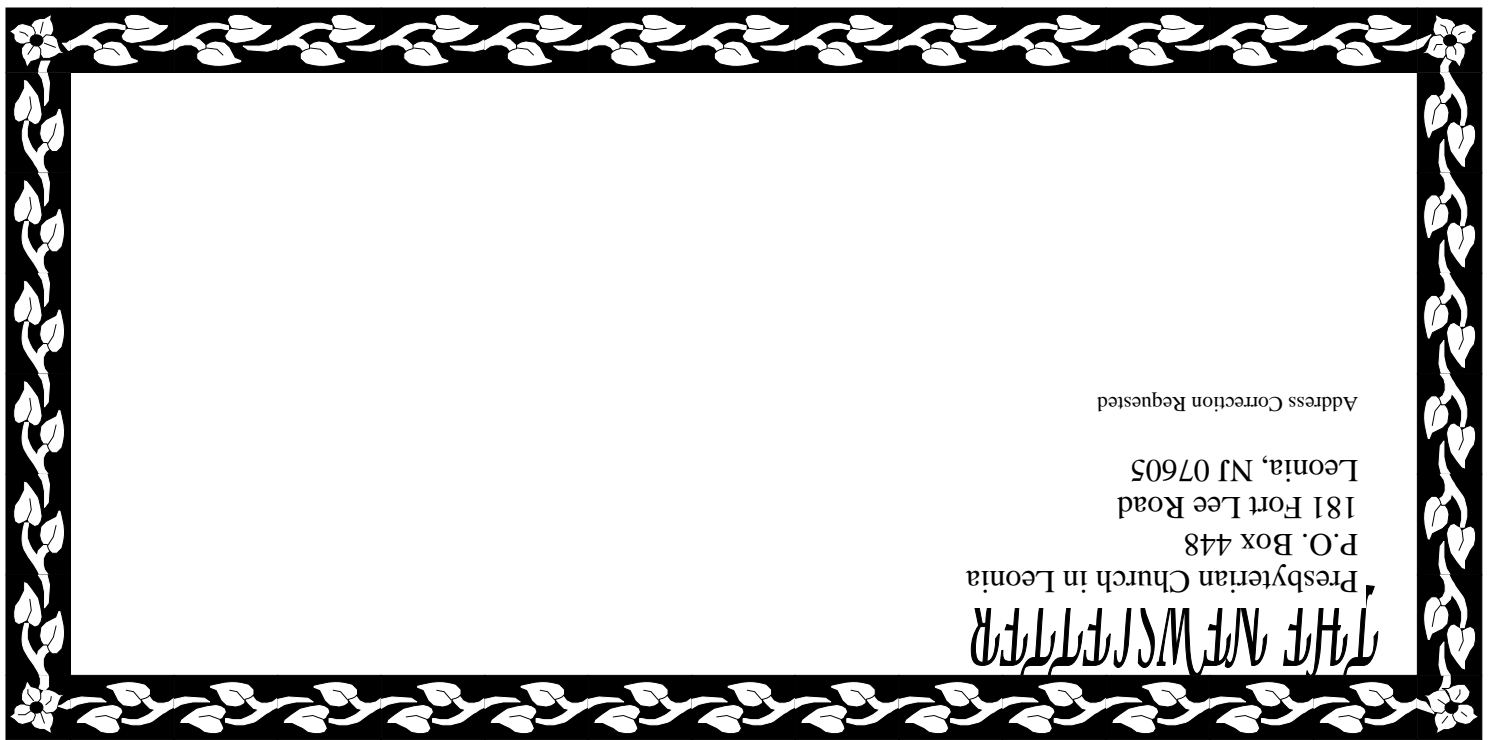


### **DINNER DANCE**

Have you heard the exciting news, and yes, **YOU ARE INVITED!** So please sign up for the **Dinner Dance** on **Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>** beginning at **6 p.m.** There will be music, contests and a gourmet dinner by celebrity chefs. Cost \$15.00, \$8.00 for children 12 and younger. Children age 5 and under are free. Tickets will be available every Sunday in the Fireplace Room. The proceeds from this event will go to continuing relief efforts in Japan through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

### **DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?**

Michele would like to update her email addresses, as well as create groups in her computer's address book and would like your help. Please call Michele in the church office, 201-944-1358 or email [secretaryleonia@yahoo.com](mailto:secretaryleonia@yahoo.com) with your current email address. Also, if you have a cell phone number and would like it listed in the directory, please also let her know.



---

THE NEWSLETTER

**If you want to continue to receive the Newsletter by mail, please fill out the enclosed post card and return it to the Presbyterian Church in Leonia.**

**If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, make sure we have your correct email address. If you cannot open the attachment, you can go to our Website ([www.leoniapres.org](http://www.leoniapres.org)) and read the Newsletter there.**

**Thank you.**

**JAZZ JAM SESSION**—Bring an instrument and play with the pros. Don't worry, any level of player is welcome! If you don't know Jazz, or you don't have plans on **Friday, October 14, 8—10 p.m. your are welcome.** Doors open at the Presbyterian Church in Leonia, 181 Fort Lee Road, at 7:30 p.m. Can't make it this month, don't worry, the next session is November 11 and we will continue on the second Friday each month thereafter.

**All Saints Episcopal Church** is having "**A Fair in the Fall**". A bazaar that features just-like-new costume jewelry, vintage handbags, holiday items, children's toys and games, decorative items, furniture, home-baked goodies and a Silent Auction. There will be magical entertainment for the kids. Come on **Saturday, October 22, from 10 a.m.—4 p.m.** to the church at 150 Park Ave.

### **CARE GIVERS PLEASE NOTE**

**A Sabbath Day for Care Givers** at Johnsonburg will be held **Sunday, October 16 from 1—7 p.m.** Whether you care for someone in your family or as part of your occupation, this day is for you. Come join us for some quiet time at Johnsonburg—walk on a guided meditation in the fall woods of camp, enjoy a time of gentle care yoga, and listening and sharing with others. Lynn Santulli will lead the program which will begin at 1 p.m. and will include dinner at 5:30. The cost for the day is \$35.

For more information, or to register 908-852-2349 Email [lorelei@campjburg.org](mailto:lorelei@campjburg.org)

**2011 All Saints Festival** on **Saturday, October 29 from 3 to 6 p.m.** at West Side Presbyterian Church 192 Demarest Ave., Englewood (at the corner of Demarest Ave. and Knickerbocker Rd.) .

Join us for goodies, games, contests, fun and more.

The **ANNUAL P.E.O. GARAGE SALE** will be held on **SUNDAY, October 16 from 10:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.** at the American Legion Hall on Broad Ave. All proceeds will benefit education for women. Please stop by to shop for a great assortment of quality items.

## HOLIDAY FAIR TRICKY TRAY/BASKET DONATIONS

Any donations of items for the “Tricky Tray/Basket” table at this year’s Holiday Fair would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be left in the designated box in the entry room or call Karen Peters (201-592-8413) to arrange for pick up of items. Please make your donation by October 24, 2010. Below are some suggested items, but please feel free to use your imagination:

Bottle of wine, Cat or dog toys/treats, Pet store gift card (\$10), Food items for theme baskets (i.e. Italian dinner night), Music CDs (i.e. easy listening), DVDs, Movie theater gift card, Candy, Bic lighter (long type for grill or fireplace lighting), Christmas ornaments, Christmas wrapping Paper/ribbon, Holiday/all occasion candles, Christmas cards (boxes), Christmas gift bags, Tea/coffee (assorted types), Tea cup and/or small tea pot, Coloring books, Washable markers, Crayons, Stickers, Children’s activity books, Wrapping paper (all occasion), Ribbons/tissue paper (all occasion), Gift bags (all occasion), Note cards (general/Thank You, etc.), Stationery, Picture frames/albums, Gift cards for local restaurants/stores (minimal amount i.e., \$10)

In addition, we can also use any of those **new** unwanted gifts you’ve received that are taking up room on a shelf and you just didn’t know what to do with!

Please be sure that any food donations are **NOT PERISHABLE** items. Thank you.

**A NOTE FROM SUSAN FISKE**—Ever since I received the wonderful signed bulletin at Pentecost I have been telling myself to write and things always get in the way. But now I have real news. My per diem job at St. Joseph’s Hospital health Center here in Syracuse is now 3-4 days a week and I have officially “joined” the department. I have moved to a town house and my new address is 4714 Kehoe Lane, Manlius, NY 13104. I have found a church I am finally comfortable in, the First Presbyterian Church in Cazenovia, New York. They only have congregants join twice a year and you have to attend classes!!! I enjoy the pastor’s sermons but they still do not match Debra’s or Deke’s or Dave’s (Texas). Oh well, I have been lucky and probably set the bar too high. Well, I think that is about it. Dolly, my cat likes our new home and doesn’t like me going to work. It is the first time in 6 years there wasn’t someone in the house—yes, that is how long ago it was when I went to Texas to care for (my sister) Martha. It doesn’t seem possible. Hope you are all well and that the congregation is continuing to grow. Please send my regards to my friends especially the Shannos.