



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
2020 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648-4606

Office: (609) 392-3258

Fax: (609) 392-1650

Website: www.slackwoodchurch.org

Rev. Ryan Irmer, Pastor
Director of Music: Shelley Zuckerman

November 2017

Living 'For the Love of the Game'

The gifts (Jesus) gave (to the Church) were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. —Ephesians 4:11-13

It sure has been fun for me to get back to coaching boys and girls at the basketball clinics at the Lawrence Community Center. Each week we work on a different skill or fundamental like Shooting, Passing, or Dribbling. We also work on proper footwork: Jump-stops, Front Pivots, Reverse Pivots. How funny it is that I always get this question from a boy or girl, **"When are we going to play actual games? Are we ever going to play 5 on 5?"** And I get it, they see LeBron James, Steph Curry, and Kevin Durant on SportsCenter doing a spectacular play while playing 5 on 5. But what they don't see is all the time, hard work, and preparation that they put forth every day in practice and individual workouts.

And so I try to explain it to them that:

- If you commit and take the time to learn how to shoot with the proper mechanics;
- If you learn how to dribble with your right and left hand;
- And if you know how to make different passes. And to jump-stop and pivot;

Then, when you have the opportunity to play in an actual game, it will be so much fun! You will score so many points. You will make such beautiful moves. You will make unselfish passes to your teammates and they'll be so glad that you're on their team. You'll probably play more often and your team will have a better chance of winning. Through all the hard work and preparation, you will then enjoy playing basketball so much more. It will become free and joyful and exhilarating!

When you watch Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James play, yes they are amazing athletes, but they also know how to shoot correctly and jump-stop and pivot. They use the same exact fundamentals that I've been teaching these fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at the Lawrence Community Center. And everyone, whether you are LeBron or a fourth grader, can play basketball equally *"for the Love of the Game."*

I firmly believe that our commitment to being a part of a Christian community where we worship together, study God's Word together, and support one another through our time and our financial giving, prepares us for everyday life. Having a consistent prayer life and devotional time prepares us for life's ups and downs. It may not be glamorous, popular or convenient, but it equips us for life and provides us with everything we need so that we can live a deep life of joy and purpose. Practicing consistent Spiritual Disciplines in our lives provides us the opportunity to not only deepen our personal relationship with God but also to experience a life that is vibrant, liberating, and downright enjoyable!

Your Pastor and Life Coach,
Ryan

SESSION ACTIONS – October 18, 2017

At its October 18 regular meeting the session voted:

- to hold dinner at the church on Thanksgiving Day for anyone who wishes to attend,
- to once again support Womanspace by participating in their Communities of Light program;
- to make a donation to the Religious Ministries Department of Princeton Health Care System;
- to authorize the Stewardship & Finance Committee to proceed with necessary duct work in the Christian Education Building.

SLACKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The PW will meet on Thursday, November 16 at 12 noon. Please bring a sandwich. Dessert will be furnished.

Study Lesson #3: "In Community with the Living Word"; Scripture - Hebrews 1:1-3; Genesis 1:1-5; Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 1:1-5,14; Hebrews 4:12-13.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING NOVEMBER 12

The next meeting of the property committee will take place following worship on Sunday, November 12. Hope to see all committee members there. If you have a suggestion or concern, contact Bill Mansmann.

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The next meeting of the "Breakfast Club" will be held Friday November 17th. We will gather in Fellowship Hall at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast and conversation.



Following breakfast we will complete a few "little" jobs around the church. Hope to see the men of the church there!

MESSY CHURCH – NOVEMBER 19

Get ready for Messy Church at 9:30 a.m. on November 19th! We will be spending some time reflecting on the gifts, talents, and skills God has given us and how we might utilize them. Please join us for intergenerational fun for all!

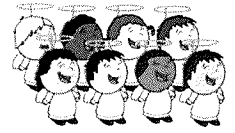
CONSECRATION SUNDAY AND COVERED DISH LUNCHEON – NOVEMBER 19

On November 19 we will celebrate Consecration Sunday at Slackwood. Preaching that day will be Dr. Shane Berg, Vice President for External Relations at Princeton Theological Seminary. At a special time during the service, each of us will be asked to consecrate, or dedicate ourselves to our church's ministries and missions. This is a confidential and voluntary commitment made as we grow in our faith through giving.

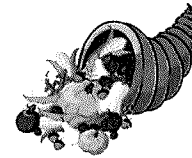
After the service we will celebrate with a covered dish luncheon. Please plan to join us.

CHILDREN SINGING IN CHURCH

If the little ones warm your heart when they sing for us during worship, don't miss seeing them on **Sunday, November 19** (after messy church) **and December 17** (during our Christmas pageant)!



ANNUAL INTERFAITH COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION



The annual Lawrence Township Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held this year on Tuesday, November 21 at 7:30 p.m. at Slackwood Church. The theme this year is "Rebuilding Community."

Plan to attend and welcome people from all the Lawrence Township religious congregations to our facility. A fellowship time will follow the service.

COMMUNITIES OF LIGHT

On Monday, December 4, Slackwood Church will join Womanspace in raising awareness of the issue of domestic violence by displaying luminaries in front of the church. At dusk on that day, hundreds of people, scores of organizations and community groups, and the 11 municipalities within Mercer County will light thousands of luminary candles. The theme of this year's campaign is "Peace Begins at Home." If you would like to display luminaries at your home on that evening, you may purchase the kits from the Womanspace office on Brunswick Avenue.

ADVENT DISCUSSION GROUP DECEMBER 5, 12, AND 19, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Are you looking for the true meaning of Christmas? Tired of hearing about Santa, presents, and shopping as the season's focus? Join our church members on **Tuesday nights** during the Advent Season. We will be reading and discussing Walter Brueggemann's book: "Devotions for Advent, Celebrating Abundance". Each day there are short, 2-page devotions which we will discuss during meetings on Dec 5, 12, and 19 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. Our pastor, the Rev. Ryan Irmer will lead us. If you are interested in joining us, please see Terrie Mansmann for a copy of the discussion book.

ADVENT SOCIAL – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

The Membership and Outreach Committee will once again sponsor an Advent Social. Last year's event at the home of Lilly and Anand Veeraraj was a huge success,

and there have been many requests for this to become a yearly tradition. We are pleased that this year's social will be held at the home of Fred Mitchell and will take place on Friday, December 8. Mark your calendars now – more details will be available soon.



**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT FOR EVERYONE!!!!!!!
DECEMBER 17th**

Have you always felt left out of the Christmas story? Wanted to be a part of the action? This year we will **once again** repeat "everyone can play a part" Christmas pageant. You will have an opportunity to be a part of the nativity scene. During the morning worship service, we will have an "interactive Christmas service". Worship attendees are asked to **arrive 15-30 minutes before the 10:30am church service** (after Messy Church). In fellowship hall we will have tables of costumes from which you can choose what character in the story you would like to dress up as. There will be costumes for angels, shepherds, various barn animals, and townspeople. This is great fun and an opportunity for the adults to play "dress up". Once the worship service begins, a narration based on the Gospel of Luke's telling of Jesus' birth is read/shared with the congregation. At various breaks in the narration, while the congregation sings a corresponding song, folks with certain costumes will go to the front of the sanctuary and help create a live nativity scene. **THERE ARE NO SPEAKING PARTS.** You only need to be a part of the story by following along with the prompts in the church bulletin. If you only want to sit in the pews and watch the story, that is okay too. We hope you will mark your calendars for this special worship service and be a part of the Christmas spirit of joy, hope, peace, and love.



NEW PEW CARDS

If you have not already noticed, there are beautiful new church pew cards located in the pew racks in the church sanctuary. Thank you to Patrick McComas for his design work and to Roger Melick for the printing of the cards.

CHURCH CLEANUP OCTOBER 21ST A SUCCESS!

Thanks to all that showed up to clean up the grounds for the winter. Many plants were trimmed and garden areas cleaned out. Truckloads of brush and leaves were taken to the recycling area. Thanks to a great crew from Slackwood and Grace Church for a terrific job that was completed in three hours! Look to join this group in the spring for our

next cleanup. Enjoy the fall and stay warm through the winter!

FALL RUMMAGE SALE

Every rummage sale is different....and the same. We see some of the same faces of participants, some of whom we now know on a first name basis. We have the same faithful church members and friends who help us during the sale. We are always amazed that we can collect a shed full, along with Betty Okeson's garage (thank you, Betty!), twice a year. We have new stories to tell after each rummage sale (ask Bill about opening day). Thank you, thank you, thank you to all those who helped out for the sale!! What a great outreach to the community and friends. We once again survived the Route 1 construction without an accident! We were pleased to have made approximately \$2,900 at the sale. Thanks be to God!

Terrie and Bill Mansmann,
Co-chairs

A NOTE FROM THE SLACKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

Thanks to our rummage sale funds, we sent 325 new garments and 100 hygiene articles to Needlework Guild Association on October 17, 2017. NGA is a nationwide organization that collects new garments year round throughout the country. Its headquarters are in Warminster, PA but the Trenton Branch collects its garments at the Ewing Presbyterian Church on Scotch Road in Ewing. Garments are distributed in the Trenton area as needed. This is a great project that the PW supports yearly.



NGA is celebrating 121 years of service. NGA was established in Philadelphia in 1885 as the Needlework Guild of America. On October 18th at 1 p.m. Marilyn Stebbins and I went to the ingathering celebration at Ewing Presbyterian Church celebrating the 121 years. It was a very interesting and informative afternoon. Our guest speaker was Sr. Loretta Maggio, Emergency Assistance Program Director of Mount Carmel Guild in Trenton, NJ. A total of over 7,000 garments were collected from our area, to be distributed to our agencies: Anchor House, Inc.; Auxiliary of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital; Children's Future Inc.; Home Society of NJ; Mill Hill Child and Family; Mount Carmel Guild of Trenton; United Progress, Inc.

The NGA Prayer

Father of all mercies, we are clothed, we are fed, we are sound in mind and body. In gratitude for these great blessings, we offer material things to those less fortunate. Add Thy blessings, we beseech thee, to the work of our hands and hearts, so that each garment may carry to the wearer not only decency and warmth, but courage, comfort and hope for brighter days. Amen

NGA – Providing new clothes for new tomorrows.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlene Filson

The Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may
be,*

*I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great
heron feeds.*

*I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.*

*And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

Our lives are continuously changing, bringing with it the lightness of joy and other times, the heaviness of grief. When I read Wendell Berry's poem "The Peace of Wild Things", I feel transported to the still waters, calm and peaceful. I am reminded that every day, I need to find The Peace of Wild Things, allowing grace to set me free.

Amelia Irmer
Deacons Co-Moderator

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

By Cathy Salvatore

Jesus in Disguise
Read Matthew 25-31-40

Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.

Whenever we care for a housebound relative, friend or a stranger, we don't complain. When one has to have their feet washed, don't say, "I hate this job"! We ask God to hide our feelings from this person. When we clean this person who is helpless we look up and for a moment feel

like you're washing the feet of Jesus Himself. Then you will feel honored to wash this person's feet.

At the time Jesus told His story on the slopes of Mount of Olives, we were told to feed the hungry and visit the sick, we did it for Him. When we visit the prison, serve the sick, give clothes to the needy, we do it for Him.

Are you "Jesus in Disguise"?

Excerpts from "When Christians Disagree"

Ray Pritchard
Keep Believing Ministries

Christians disagree about almost everything. And when we disagree, we usually start a new church.

A Scottish Presbyterian is rescued after many years of living alone on a desert island. When he is picked up, the captain says to him, "I thought you were stranded alone." "I was," replied the castaway. "Why are there three huts on the beach?"

"Well, the first one is my house, and the second one is where I go to church."

"What about the third one?"

"Oh, that's my old church."

We don't agree on everything and that's okay. Sometimes in the family of God we're going to disagree strongly and that's okay. Sometimes we're going to disagree to the point that we can't even work together any more. That's okay too. Sometimes we're going to go our separate ways and that's okay. We don't all have to go to the same church or belong to the same denomination or believe the same way on controversial issues.

But we do have to love one another. That's a non-negotiable command of Jesus Christ (John 13:35). *No matter how much or how passionately we disagree, we still must love each other.*

Here's a simple, five-step outline for discovering God's will in doubtful areas where Christians disagree:

Step # 1: Pray for guidance

Step # 2: Search the Scriptures

Step # 3: Seek godly counsel

Step # 4: Ask God to give you specific direction

Step # 5: Decide what you believe.

When we get to heaven, the Lord will reveal the truth to us. Between now and then, there are going to be plenty of disagreements in the church. That's part of the price we pay for being human. But we have the opportunity to deal with our disagreements honestly and graciously because we know Jesus Christ. He makes the difference.

What do you do when Christians disagree? Hold your convictions but hold them in love.