

# News-Line

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*Lincoln Park Community United Methodist Church Newsletter  
Lincoln Park, Pennsylvania*

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*March-April 2022*

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## Christ Is Risen!

CHRIST  
IS RISEN  
INDEED

# Alleluia

*Please Join us on Easter Sunday*

*April 17*

*In-person and online at 9 and 11 am*

***Bring Your Easter Basket!***

Your kids and grandkids, ages 0-12, are invited for an **EASTER EGG HUNT** between services.

Want to help? Terrific! **KC Dianna** is asking for cash donations and wrapped candy to be dropped off at the Church Office or in the Wagner Room.

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**LP Church Welcomes New  
Director of Music  
at Ash Wednesday Service  
See pages 2-3.**





**at Lincoln Park Church  
In Person, Currently at 9 & 11**

*Worship times are subject to change right now; members will be notified should that occur.*

**Sunday Services Continue Virtually,  
via Live Streaming on Facebook**

We thank all our participants. If you're willing to help, by recording your part and emailing it, please call Pastor Kurien, 570-573-1455.

To view Sunday worship services, click on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/lpcumc/>

The service livestream begins at 9 & 11 am (EDT) and appears at the top of the "Posts" listings, just below the picture of the altar area of our sanctuary.

You can make the livestream a "full screen" view by using the "click to enlarge" icon in the lower right corner.

**Please submit your prayer requests** by clicking on *Prayer Request* tab at the top of the LPCUMC home page, or by using this link and filling in the *Prayer Request* fields: <https://www.lpcumc.org/prayer-request/>

You may receive a "pop-up," asking you to log in or create a new Facebook account. **You don't have to create a Facebook account, so click "Not Now."**

**LET'S SHARE THESE OPPORTUNITIES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.**



Come and worship with us on **Wednesday, March 2**, 7 pm. We will welcome our new Organist/Director of Music, **Irina Shmeleva**. A resident of Ephrata, Irina is a graduate of St. Petersburg Conservatory, St. Petersburg, Russia.

On this first day of Lent, we practice the imposition of ashes to remember our mortal nature as humans and celebrate communion to experience God's presence.

## **“Music Is my Life and My Passion” Says Our New Director of Music**

My name is **Irina Shmeleva**. I was born in Leningrad (now St Petersburg), Russia and lived there all my life until 2007 when our family moved to USA. We reside in Ephrata, and this little town became our second home.

I graduated from St Petersburg Conservatory and have my PhD in Chamber Music and Accompaniment. Since 2007, I’ve worked for Pennsylvania Academy of Music, St Luke’s UCC in Trappe PA and St. Paul’s UCC in Bowmansville. I’ve collaborated with Jennifer Lobo’s vocal studio, the Fulton Opera and numerous soloists. And of course, I’ve been teaching piano throughout my entire life. Music is my life and my passion.

My husband **Dmitry** is also a professional musician. We have a daughter named **Elena**. She is an EMT, lives in Allentown with her husband **Jake**, two dogs, and two cats.

I’m extremely excited to become a part of Lincoln Park United Methodist Church. I’m full of ideas and plans that I’ll be sharing with Pastor Chris and the church committee. But I can’t do anything without you, good people of this church - without your voices, your talents, your energy and ideas! If you want to sing- talk to me! If you want to play- talk to me! If you have kids or grandkids who play any instruments- here I am again!



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On **Sunday, March 13**, at 3 pm, there will be a concert in our sanctuary by the **Reading Philharmonic Orchestra**. The orchestra requires everyone to wear a mask.

# Our 40-Day Journey Begins

From Pastor Christopher Kurien

On March 2, we begin another Lenten journey with **Ash Wednesday**.

Let me share a bit of history about the observance of Lent leading up to the celebration of Easter. Historically, the length of preparation for Easter increased from one week, to three and then six weeks, excluding Sundays. Sundays were held by the church as *mini-Easters*.

In Jerusalem, as early as the fourth century, Christians fasted for 40 days in preparation for Easter. The 40 days consisted of five days a week for eight weeks. They symbolized the 40 days that Moses stayed on Mount Sinai, the 40 days that Elijah journeyed to Mount Horeb, and the 40 days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness.

In the seventh century, the church arrived at a 40-day preparation period for Easter. There was fasting for six weeks, six days a week, for a total of 36 days. Then it was decided to include the four days preceding the first Sunday of preparation. The first day of Lent then came to be known as Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday

we practice the imposition of ashes to remember our mortal nature as humans and celebrate communion to experience God's presence.

The word 'Lent' comes from the word *Lengthen* or *Lencten*, referring to the lengthening of days during spring. Interestingly, *Lent* and *Spring* bear similar meaning. Like spring, Lent gives way to new life. For the early

Christians there was much joy when they gathered for the Easter celebration. They greeted one another on Easter Sunday (as well as on every other time they gathered), saying *Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed*.

We also know from history that many early disciples were persecuted for their faith. Sadly, today there are still many places in the world where Christians are persecuted for practicing their faith in the risen Christ. In our country it is rare that one suffers for having faith in Christ.

This Easter may we find time to enjoy the new life around us while remembering the joy of that first Easter Day. Even



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*(Continued from page 4)*

if you're not able to come to church, plan to join us online or read through or sing the Easter hymns.

May I also encourage those who are able to join in some of our activities during this season — like the Bible reading group, Wednesday night meetings, or community walking program. Then, we may grow in the Lord and stay healthy! And, please remember to pray for persecuted Christians as we commit ourselves anew to sharing our faith with those yearning to hear the good news of Christ's resurrection. Let us help everyone experience the blessing of Christian community.

May you all have a blessed Lententide, a glorious Easter, and a beautiful spring!

With prayers,

*Pastor Christopher Kurien*

## **Midweek Lenten Gatherings**

From **Pastor Christopher Kurien**

Those who are able and interested will gather at church at 6 pm, Wednesdays, to share soup and salad. Around 6.30 pm we'll have a short service. Some members will also have an opportunity to share stories of their journeys through brief reflections, which will hopefully help members to better know each other.

In addition, we'll be praying for various needs in our community and world, including the present crisis in Ukraine.

Soup and salad will be offered by different interested participants each week.



## **About Masks...from Richard Bashore**

Our mask *requirement* has been changed back to *masks are recommended* (particularly if you're not vaccinated) rather than *required*. Hopefully, things will continue to improve in this area, and we'll soon be able to stop talking about masks at all.



# Making Difficult Decisions

From Jerry Manhart, Stewardship and Finance Chair

As I write this in mid-February, the **Finance Committee and Church Council** will soon be deciding the church **operating budget** for 2022. We'll have to make difficult decisions. The problem is to have a **balanced budget**.

If you contributed to our church in 2021, you should have already received your end of the year **statement** and noticed the blue insert. It stated that for 2021 our church had a **shortfall** of **\$55,493**. Income was \$244,368 and expenses \$299,861. If you're thinking the shortfall was due to many mission projects or the new sign, you're mistaken. Those projects were outside the budget.

Fortunately, we had some **funds in reserve** to cover the loss, so don't expect to see a FOR SALE sign in front of the church, but we can't sustain such losses.

The **solution** to balance the budget is to **reduce expenses, increase income**, or both. But that won't be easy. Our biggest **expenses** in the budget are for Trustees and Staff Parish. The **Trustees** use their funds to maintain our church, Education Building, and

Office. We no longer own the parsonage and Emes rental property. I don't think anyone wants to see our beautiful buildings start to decline. The **Staff Parish** part of the budget is used to pay our staff. If we reduce staff, ministry is reduced.

We'd have less to offer our members and attract new members. At one time some staff jobs were held by volunteers, but that is usually not possible anymore. Even though many members are watching our services from home, our expenses continue as though they are all sitting in the pews. Fortunately, our expenses really have not changed very much over the last several years.

The real problem has been our **income**. Our income has been decreasing the last several years. Last year we were down \$82,720 from a high in 2018. Some members have died, moved away from the area, or are not attending church because of Covid or other reasons. Many members have not recently increased their giving.

We must find ways to **increase attendance and giving, attract new members and find new sources of income**. We will need **everyone's help** and suggestions to get our church finances moving in the right direction.

**YOUR GIVING MATTERS!**

# Three New Initiatives for LP Church

From Pastor Christopher Kurien

1

You can join others — including your pastor and persons worldwide—in a **Bible Reading Group**.

Through WhatsApp on your phone, you can read the entire Bible in a certain number of days— like 300, 240, or 180 days. Reading materials and reflections from people everywhere are shared through a WhatsApp group, helping you understand what you're reading. The use of study materials, like a Bible dictionary or commentary, are helpful but not necessary. And, of course, search engines like Google can clear doubts and questions.

Please consider joining others in reading and studying God's Word systematically. Already, there are thousands of WhatsApp groups (with 10 or more people) in the program. Hun-

dreds of people (with different languages and from all over the world) are joining everyday. Using the App, we read and study God's word at home, whenever we choose, and at no expense.

There are many possibilities. You will read the Bible with friends, family members, neighbors, and contacts worldwide. You may consider joining as a group admin in this program to in-

clude family and friends. Some people may take down import points for future reference.

To join, sign up in the Wagner Room, get WhatsApp on your phone, and contact **Pastor Chris**, 570-573-1455, or **Christopherkurien@gmail.com**. Give

him your phone number and he'll see that you're added to the group. You may consider joining as a group admin to include family and friends.

**If we read and meditate on God's word, blessings will abound.**



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## Be Part of Our New Care Ministry

2

The Care Ministry was birthed from a recent conversation with our Lay Leaders. Our initial idea is to prepare a hot meal once a month and share it with senior members or neighbors who'd appreciate it.

Already, a team is beginning to meet, plan, cook, and deliver meals. So far the team members include: **Roe and Jim Gehman, Allen Koeble, Lauren and Casey Pierson, Cindy and Dave Kercher, Jerry and Lou Manhart, and Cheri Fallon.**



**CHRISTIANS**  
Caring for each other

If you're interested in joining the team in any capacity, please contact **Pastor Chris**, 570-573-1455, or **Jim Gehman**, 610-207-6151. We need people to cook and deliver meals, and to share your resources for this new ministry.

Eventually, we'd like to help neighbors with simple chores, depending on the availability of volunteers. We're already encouraged by the overwhelming response. If you know of a senior in your area who'd appreciate this ministry, please contact us.

## Lincoln Park Community Walking Program

3

The goal of our walking program is to stay healthy and create community among us, while getting to better know surrounding neighborhoods.

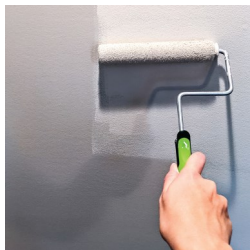
We could gather at church, near our new sign, to share a few minutes together, offer a prayer, and start walking, each time in a different direction. Hopefully, we'll better appreciate God's creation—and each other—while acquainting ourselves with church neighbors. Please consider joining us as soon as the weather gets warmer. Since we'll be outdoors, it will be a good way to get together, even during a pandemic.





## Get Out Your Painting Clothes

From **Richard Bashore**, Trustees Chair

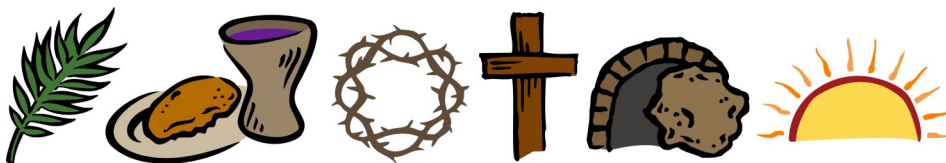


The Trustees will have a **Church workday** on **Saturday, March 19, 9 am - noon**. Most of the work will involve painting interior walls in the Education Building and Church Office. Materials will be provided; just wear old clothing.

## Good News: It's Time to Order Easter Flowers!

From **KC Dianna**

Please help us decorate our beautiful church with flowers that you can take home after Easter services. We'll have lilies, tulips, and daffodils at \$9 each. They can be dedicated as *in honor of* \_\_\_, *in memory of* \_\_\_, or *to the glory of God*. To order, email: [cb1014@yahoo.com](mailto:cb1014@yahoo.com), call KC, 484-955-9402, or pick up paper forms at church. Deadline is April 3.



## Welcome Newcomers!

We invite you to any meetings or activities you read about here. Please call the Church Office, 610-777-1422, for names, phone numbers, information, or to speak with our pastor. If you'd like to receive *News-Linc* in the mail, just notify our Secretary, Beth Caswell. Please join in at Lincoln Park!



## IS THERE A GRADUATE IN YOUR FAMILY?

Let us know. We'd like to write about their accomplishments, interests, and future plans. Please send information to [cherfallon@comcast.net](mailto:cherfallon@comcast.net) or deliver to my mailbox in the Church Office. Or call **Cheri Fallon**, 610-678-8735.

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## Let Christ's Peace Rule

From Jenna Firestone, *Communications Resource*

I once crafted a trendy sign that read *Make it happen*. It reminded my high-achieving self to take the bull by the horns and work hard. Though that message isn't necessarily harmful, I've come to appreciate a different approach.

On her podcast *The Next Right Thing*, Emily P. Freeman shared the concept of *Let it count*. She traded the word *make*, which implies forceful effort and control, for the word *let*, which is surprisingly more powerful. Consider Colossians 3:15, which begins, "*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.*" (NIV) *Let* involves an intentional decision to set aside selfish desires to *make* and to allow God's way and will to play out instead. When we *let* Christ's peace rule, we can truly "let go and let God," relinquishing control to the One who ultimately holds it.

Although I still have my sign, now it's a reminder to let God and his peace happen — and to let him take the reins of my days and my life.

—Janna Firestone

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*We extend our deepest sympathy...*



† to **Emory Towles** and his family on the loss of **Emory's wife, Ruth**, 100, on January 25. Ruth and Emory would have been married 77 years on February 15. She was a mother of three: **Carol Piersody**, **Kevin Towles**, and **Christine Perez**. She also was a grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of 14. An administrator at Daniel Boone Homestead, Ruth loved history.



# Lincoln Park's Bulletin Board



*April 15  
for our  
May—  
June issue*

*News-Linc*, bi-monthly publication of Lincoln Park Community United Methodist Church, hopes to link you to your church with information about its programs, plans, and people. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and may be left in the newsletter mailbox by the Church Office.

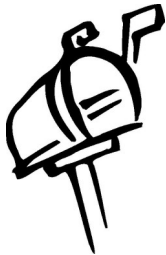
Our staff-

Editor: Cheri Fallon, 610-678-8735

Staff: Nancy Artz, Bunny Carlson, Ed Fallon, Diane Fisher, Nancy Madeira, Lou Manhart, Mark & Jack Villecco

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

to **Richard Larsen**  
whose **90<sup>th</sup>** birthday was  
February 29.



*To my Lincoln  
Park Family,*

I am indeed grateful for your many years of encouragement, support, and love... and for your generous farewell gifts, cards, notes, and calls. It was an honor to serve in your Music Ministry and Christian Education programs. My 16 years with you were filled with friendships and many warm memories, both of which will remain in my heart. I wish you God's peace, love, and joy.

**Beverly**

To the talented **DORINNE BILGER**, who so capably and willingly provided the music for our services in the interim between Music Directors. Bravo!

To **JACK VILLECCO**, who has been duplicating and folding the *News-Linc* for years now, on short notice, with pizzazz.

To our amazing snow removal team, led by **JERRY** and **LOU MANHART**: **RICHARD** and **CAROL BASHORE**, **RICH AUMAN**, **GEOFF WHITELEY**, **JIM** and **ROE GEHMAN**, **KRIS** and **KRISTA GILHAM**, and **DAVE**, **DEBBIE**, and **ADAM GEHR**.

# NEWS-LINC

Lincoln Park Community United Methodist Church  
1 Carlisle Avenue  
Reading, PA 19609

**Non-Profit Organization**

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Reading, PA

Permit No. 233

*Change service requested*

Worship with us: In-Person at **9 & 11 AM CURRENTLY** (Subject to change)

**WORSHIP IS LIVESTREAMED AT BOTH SERVICES** (See p. 2)

Pastor: The Rev Dr Christopher Kurien, 570-573-1455

Contemporary Program Coordinator: Mark Villecco

Director of Music: Irina Shmeleva

Office Administrator: Elizabeth Caswell

Accounting and Finance: Marilyn Seiders

Nursery: Kathi Ernst

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E-mail: [info@lpcumc.org](mailto:info@lpcumc.org) (Secretary and Church)

For urgent messages, use voicemail, please.



Let's do good to all people.

Galatians 6:10, NASB

