

## Only in America

Can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

Are there handicap parking spaces in front of a skating rink.

Do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.

Do we have cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.

Do we buy hot dogs in packages of 10 and buns in packages of 8.

Do we use the word "politics" to describe the process so well: "Poli" in Latin meaning "many" and "tics" meaning "bloodsucking creatures."

Do we have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.

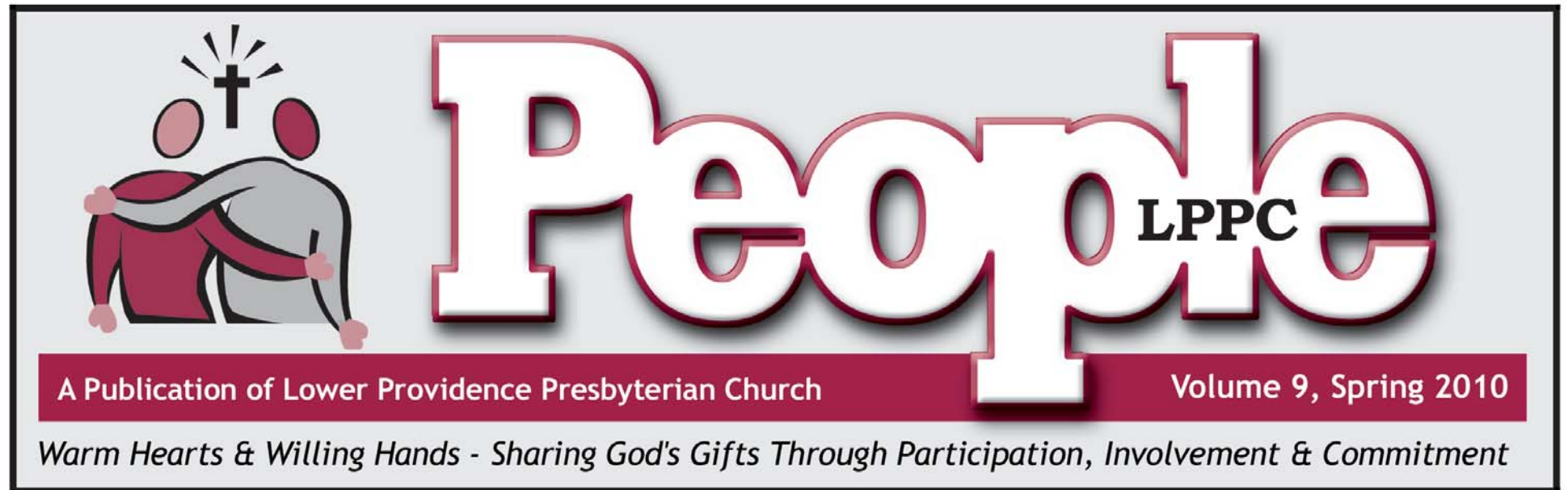


## LPPC's Ministries

Serving the Community In Christ

- Pre-school for three and four year olds and pre-kindergarten children
- FROGS (Fully Relying on God's Salvation) for fourth and fifth graders
- Jr. High Fellowship for youth in grades six through eight
- Sr. High Fellowship for youth in grades nine through twelve
- Cross Point Young Adult Fellowship for high school graduates to twenty-seven years old
- Presbyterian Women-- seven circles for Bible and book study, projects and fellowship
- Retired Group for fellowship and trips
- Dinner at Seven-- series of fellowship dinners for small groups
- Golden Age-- luncheons for seniors
- Presbyterian Seniors-- fellowship and trips for seniors
- Music-- Cherub Choir, Young Presbyterians, Youth Chorale, Chancel Choir, Handbell Choirs, Sunrise Singers, Praise Team
- Vacation Bible School for children four years old through just completed fourth grade

Visit the LPPC web site at [lppcmin.org](http://lppcmin.org) for more detailed information.



## Money Talk

### Tight Fisted Christians

Excerpts from an article in *Presbyterians Today* on a book *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* by Christian Smith and Michael O. Emerson with Patricia Snell.

...The median giving of contemporary American Christians, the wealthiest Christians in the history of the church, is less than one percent of their household

income. That small percentage includes not only what they give to their churches, but to all charities combined.

...if American Christians gave 10 percent of their post-tax earnings, it could generate an additional \$133.4 billion for ministry and missions around the world. The long hypothetical lists of what that money could do demonstrate that the power of such generosity would be nothing short of astonishing.

But the second chapter of the book details the sad reality:

- 20 percent of Christians give absolutely no money to church or to non-church charities.
- The vast majority give very little.
- 5 percent of Christians contribute about 60 percent of all Christian giving.
- Wealthier Christians give a lower percentage of their income than their less well-off brothers and sisters.
- In spite of the tremendous growth of per capita income over the 20th Century, the proportional giving actually declined.

• Most money given to churches eventually benefits the givers and not causes outside of the congregation.

The authors cite several reasons for low giving rates, including simple ignorance of church teaching about stewardship. They also note that many Americans give in an unstructured way "as they feel like it" from week to week, and may lack trust both in their own church and in charities generally. Churches have low expectations of giving, and there are no consequences for stingy giving. Consumerism is also mentioned as a main culprit, and that places the entire issue of giving in a larger sociological and culture web.

...it is clear that the authors are committed Christians who care about the church. They suggest the recovery of the discipline of tithing, though they acknowledge that most Americans would be against mandatory tithing as a condition of church membership. ■

*It is not what we have that counts, but our willingness to give it. (Life Application Study Bible)*

"There are no degrees of honesty."

*Our Daily Bread*

### LPPC People

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"For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building."

(1 Corinthians 3:9)

## FAITH PASSAGE

Heather Price

"I believe you have to be ready to receive God in your faith journey, and you need people to help you."



Heather Price and her family have been members of LPPC for about four years. She teaches pre-school at Trinity Lutheran Church; she is also a pharmacy technician. Her husband Alan is a medicinal chemist for Glaxo-Smith Kline. They have two children Aiden and Katie who participate in the youth program. Heather is completing her first term as an Elder at LPPC; she is a member of the Christian Education Committee.

"When I was growing up, my family didn't go to church," stated Heather. "My father was Catholic and my mother was Presbyterian. But my mother often talked to me about God, and I remember praying as a child."

Fortunately for Heather, her grandfather was a Presbyterian minister. During summers she spent some

time with him, and she attended services at his church. "This helped to ground my faith," Heather commented. "Although I wouldn't consider myself very far along in my faith journey at that time, I did recognize then that everything else can fail you-- God does not."

Coincidentally with her desire to find a church for her children when her family moved to Norristown, Heather spent a lot of time listening to the preacher Joel Olsteen on radio and television. "Before I came to LPPC, he was kind of my church," said Heather. "One of the things Joel emphasized that influenced me was to find a good Bible-based church for yourself and your family. I found this at LPPC."

Heather was steered to LPPC by a friend who gave testimony to her at that time. "Before then, if someone had begun to talk to me about faith, I probably would have tuned them out, but it was the right time for me," Heather explained. "Having drifted faith-wise while in college and shortly thereafter, I was ready to resume my faith journey. I've always believed you have to be ready to receive God. I also found it's difficult to travel on faith's path without having people helping you."

From the start Heather found she had a comfort level with LPPC. "Some churches I attended came on so strong that it was a turnoff. At LPPC I found you could ease yourself into things; there was no pressure to do this or that."

Heather tells a funny story about the classrooms at LPPC before the renovations. "The first time I went upstairs, it was like stepping into my grandfather's church when I was a child. It looked the same-- the windows, doorways and wooden fixtures-- and it had the same faint musty odor I remembered. I am so happy my children are benefiting from the renovations and the outstanding youth program at LPPC."

As an Elder Heather feels she has benefited from the opportunity to learn what goes on behind the scenes in the operation of the church and to watch members of different ages and backgrounds work together. "It functions like a little congress where we come to consensus on issues. It also has helped me to get to know other members whom I may not have otherwise been exposed to."

Heather looks upon her faith journey as continuing, aided by fellow members in Christ and the clergy at LPPC. "I like the fact that Peter's preaching is Bible-based and the fact that his sermons and Sunday School classes are down to earth. My family and I have found a spiritual home at LPPC."

**Heather's favorite scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:4  
*Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope and patience never fail.* ■

## What God Has Promised

*God has not promised skies always blue,*

*Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;*

*God has not promised sun without rain,*

*Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.*

*But God has promised strength for the day,*

*Rest for the labor, light for the way,*

*Grace for the trials, help from above,*

*Unfailing sympathy, undying love.*

Annie Johnson Flint

## - Hill Watch -

The LPPC Congregation contributed a total of \$7,574 to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program for Haiti, including gifts from individual members and an allocation from the Serving Committee. In addition, some members of the church made gifts directly to various humanitarian efforts to help the Haitian people recover from the devastating earthquake.

## Presbyterians Split Politically

The following excerpts are from a 2008 survey conducted by research coordinator Jack Marcum for the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as reported in *Presbyterians Today*.

Almost half of Presbyterian members and Elders are Republicans compared to only 23 percent of pastors.

Half of pastors are Democrats in contrast to less than 31% of members and 29% of Elders.

About one in four Presbyterians, regardless of grouping, are independents.

Political preferences among Presbyterians have remained relatively stable since 1987. The main trend has been a modest decline in the percentage of Republicans, but without much corresponding increase in the percentage of Democrats.

Religious beliefs are strongly related to political preference. Among members, for example, 26 percent of Democrats, but 50 percent of Republicans, agree

that "only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved."

...these results show that it is impossible to separate faith from other aspects that make us who we are.

...We may all be Presbyterians, but that is just one characteristic among many that defines each of us, and it is intertwined with political identification, age, gender, and many others to make us who we are.

...My guess is that many can recall a meeting or situation where political perspectives or other non-religious considerations seemed more influential to some participants than church teaching. ■

PROFILE  
**People**

**Karen Persons**

*Floral arranger extraordinaire dedicated teacher of the learning disabled, committed mother, a deep faith, and 18-year member of the Bell Choir are just some of the many different facets of Karen Persons' life. She and her family have been members of LPPC for 23 years, and both of her sons Bryan and Chad went through the youth program. Both Karen and her husband Dan were active parent volunteers during their fellowship years.*

A graduate of Delaware Valley College with a major in Ornamental Horticulture focusing on Floriculture, Karen has applied her floral arrangement skills to many activities at LPPC from decorating the sanctuary to providing flowers for special occasions. She also has served at various times on committees for the organ restoration, organ director, Christian Education, music and worship, nominating, contemporary worship, Bible School, and she has been a Sunday School teacher. Circle 6 claims her as a current member, and she has previously been a member of Circles 1 and 5.

Karen has been a florist for over 25 years. For 10 years Karen has also been a teaching assistant for learning disabled children in the second through the fifth grades at Belmont Hills Elementary School in Lower Merion.

Before coming to LPPC, Karen and Dan lived in Norristown when they spotted an ad in the newspaper for an old farmhouse for sale on Ridge Pike about a mile up the road from LPPC. They decided to buy the property and move into it, subsequently embarking on a "fix-it-upper" journey that lasts to this day.

Karen's parents were Sunday School teachers who also helped head the youth program where Karen attended church as a child, so she has always had grounding in her faith. In addition, many years ago, her aunt and uncle, a



doctor, traveled with missionaries to Haiti. Karen remembers them telling her how religious Haitians were despite their abject poverty, characteristics apparently still typifying life in Haiti today, even as they attempt to recover from the tragic aftermath of an earthquake.

In his later years, Karen's father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and he was given only a few months to live. During a special family occasion, a surprised expression suddenly appeared on his face. "My father claimed he experienced a warmth in his body where the pancreas is located, and then all pain and discomfort disappeared," stated Karen. "My father was convinced he had received a healing blessing, and contrary to the doctor's diagnosis, he lived for a few more years for which we all felt blessed.

"I have always believed the Lord would get me through whatever troubles arose," declared Karen. "Our family, like most, has had its share of setbacks, but the Lord has been a constant presence in my life." In addition, Karen cites the "wonderful lifetime friends" she has found at LPPC as being a source of comfort and strength for her.

Before coming to LPPC, Karen attended another church nearby for a short time where she felt the congregation was not as diverse as LPPC's. She liked LPPC immediately, especially its youthfulness. Long-time member Donna Moser invited her to join Circle 1, and this began Karen's long association with the church.

Karen believes in change as being appropriate and necessary. She approves of the renovations and the new Narthex which she thinks will help to attract people to LPPC. She hopes methods will be developed to do a better job of involving new members early in their membership. From her own experience, this leads to the fellowship so basic to faith and commitment.

Karen's favorite scripture is Luke 1:37. *For nothing is impossible with God.* ■

**THE PASTOR SPEAKS**

*Excerpts from sermons from Senior Pastor Peter N. Smith*

**GOD'S PLAN**

Conforming to God's plan, rather than rebelling against it, is **marvelously liberating**-- the opposite of confining or restricting, as some people think... God's plan, which he reveals to us in Scripture, is to **build the church** through you and me, one person at a time... God promises to bless us with His presence as we continue to serve Him and obey Him. Not all of us can go to India to install a clean water system. Not all of us can preach or teach or baptize people. Not all of us can work on our Narthex construction project... But we can all **give to prepare and provide for building the church** with all our might, like David!

**CHILDREN OF GOD**

All human beings are God's creatures in the sense that He makes and governs us and provides for us, but only **believers** become His **children** by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Child of God** speaks of relationship, trust, love, dependence on God as a little child depends on Mom and Dad for all good things. *Yet to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave us the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.* Salvation is all by God's sovereign grace. It has to be received... **Adoption** as God's children through faith brings a new name (Christian), and with that new name also new life-- new promises, priorities, possibilities, and responsibilities for the glory of God.

**JOY AND HAPPINESS**

...That is the difference between joy and happiness. Happiness depends on circumstances-- health, wealth, success. Joy as we know it depends on relationship with God. J. I. Packer says living in this world is never a joy ride, but for the Christian *it may become a "joy road" through response to the call of God.* C. S. Lewis wrote about his conversion to Christianity (**Surprised by Joy**): *No slightest hint was vouchsafed to me that there ever had been... a connection between God and joy.* He was looking for a place, a condition or achievement; *instead, I found it to be a Person. God is joy, so God's people are joyful.*

**WE REAP WHAT WE SOW**

...The trouble begins when we deceive ourselves with the idea that we can reap what we do not sow, or that we will not reap what we do sow. Paul says we mock God if we think His law of sowing and reaping does not apply to me or you. *As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it* (Job 4:8). (Hosea 8:7), *They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. Bad seed produces a bad harvest. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction.*

...Eugene Peterson writes: *Every word of criticism, every avoidance of compassion, every indulgence of greed is a seed that will mature to evil corruption.* John Stott adds harboring a grudge, nursing a grievance, entertaining an impure fantasy, indulging a temptation, and wallowing in self-pity is sowing to please the sinful nature. Sow complaint, reap bitterness. Sow selfishness, reap scarcity. Sow anger, reap discord. Sow impatience, reap carelessness. Sow indifference, reap mediocrity... ■

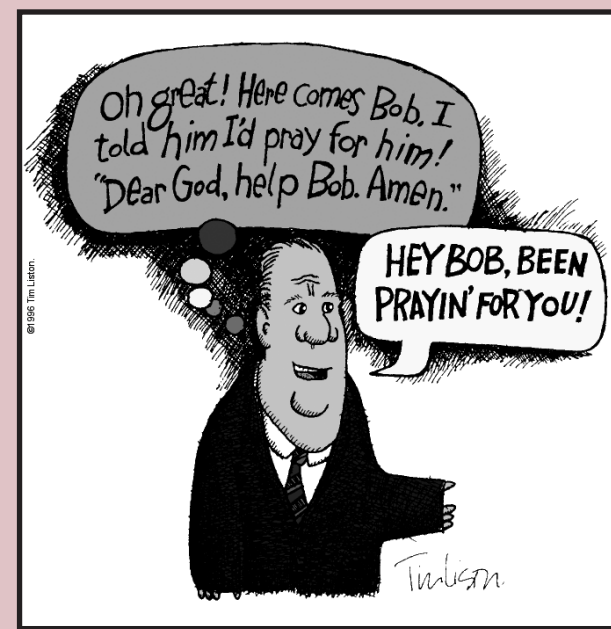
**WHAT'S THE SCOOP?**

**Does Prayer Really Matter?**

*(Excerpts from Presbyterians Today, an article by Donald K. McKim)*

...In a world that emphasizes "scientific explanations," some wonder if prayer is an illusion, a superstition born of ignorance. Some doubt God could get so involved in our lives that we can expect our personal petitions to gain a hearing with the Almighty. For others it seems unfair that God would seemingly answer some prayers, when others who pray just as sincerely appear not to gain their requests.

...So does prayer really matter? Does it have any effect-- on us, or on God?



**God Hears and Answers**

...We have the words of Jesus to assure that our prayers are answered. "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matthew 7: 7-8) These are definitive statements. Jesus does not couch His terms or hedge His bets.

...The psalmist cries out, "In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me" (Psalm 86:7). God promises to answer (Psalm 91:15). "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective," says the book of James (5:16), for "the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up" (5:15).

...An astonishing statement from the Heidelberg Catechism says that the word "Amen" ...means "this shall truly and certainly be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard by God than I am persuaded in my heart that I desire such things" from God. (Book of Confessions 4.129).

**Jesus is Our Advocate**

...Yet we don't live long as Christians before we realize our prayers are not always answered as we wish. We pray to get into a certain school and the application is declined. We pray to get a particular job and it is not offered. Parents pray for the healing of their child and the child is not healed.

Sometimes we later see benefits in the "no" answer God apparently has given. We may go to another school and there meet a future spouse. We may find the closed door of one job leads us to seek a new one in another field, which ultimately turns out to be much better. Even in the deep sadness that can occur when prayers for healing are not answered, there may be blessings.

There is an old expression. "When God says 'No,' God gives us something better." We should not say this glibly, because true pain can come when our prayers are apparently answered by "no" or "wait." Paul's prayer to gain relief from his "thorn" in the flesh was not answered by healing, but by God's promise: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). A sense of God's sustaining presence with us is sometimes the "answer" to our prayers.

...Ending our prayers "in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" reminds us that Jesus is our "advocate" and our "mediator" with God... Our prayers matter to Jesus Christ since He is "for us" with God. God hears and answers our prayers for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ... Nothing can matter more than sharing what matters most to us with God in Jesus Christ.

*God delights in the earnest prayers of His people.* (Our Daily Bread)

*An important part of praying is a willingness to be a part of the solution.* (Our Daily Bread) ■

*"Bible study is not merely to inform us-- it's meant to transform us."*

*Our Daily Bread*

**IS IT RIGHT TO FEAR A LOVING GOD?**



**Fear means different things to different people.** At one extreme fear can be immobilizing. It can be so pervasive as to prevent someone from doing anything. At the other extreme fear can be used as a stimulant to accomplish something. For example, professional golfer Padraig Harrington, winner of both

the British Open and PGA Championship in one year, uses fear to perform his very best. "Yes, fear is a big part of me," he said. "Fear pushes me on. Keeps me getting to the gym. I have to work with it (fear) and use it."

**Fear can come in many forms.** Fear of failure is very common. And as strange as it may seem, some people have fear about succeeding. Consciously or unconsciously they do things to make sure they cannot succeed at a task or job. And there is fear of growing old and fear of the future and fear of death and fear of losing loved ones-- some examples of the many fears that can plague us. The dictionary definition of fear is "an agitated feeling aroused by awareness of actual or threatening danger, trouble, etc. Dread. Terror."

**All of us would like to live without fear.** We look at our heroes and admire how fearless they are. We wish we could be like them, rising to every challenge in our lives and never being captive of fear.

**What about fear of God?** Does it make sense to fear a loving God? Shouldn't we bask in God's love for each of us without fearing Him? Or, as strange as it may seem, does fearing God actually lead us on a path that erases or minimizes other fears? Is the fear of God the same kind of fear that the dictionary defines?

**The Bible is so filled with references to the fear of God in the Old and New Testaments** it is difficult to conclude we should not fear Him, although some of us seem to prefer to hear only about God's love and ignore the commandment to fear Him. In many scholars' views

*the fear of God is just the beginning of understanding. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.* (Psalm 111:10) Solomon said: *Now all has been heard, here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

**So, is the fear of God just filled with "dread" or "terror" as the dictionary suggests?** Or does it have a deeper meaning that interacts with love? Many scholars define the fear of God in terms of awe, wonder, reverence, respect, and love for a perfectly holy and righteous Creator. The true fear of the Lord is so deep as to make us all want to please Him at all costs. It motivates us to holiness; it gives us a sense of security; it produces satisfaction and brings great blessings. Walking in the fear of the Lord and living by the Bible removes feelings of insecurity and abandonment, and fear of worldly threats. When we truly fear the Lord, our other fears do subside. This is what the Apostle John meant when he said: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear...*

**Fear of the Lord is not the opposite of love.** They are partners in our relationship with God. *The Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.* (Psalm 147:11) When we fear the Lord we are showing our love of Him and our understanding of His great love for us. It is an attitude of the heart that causes us to obey God even when it is easier to do something else. *Through a fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.* (Psalm 16:6b)

**Walking in fear of the Lord has to be a decision each makes for oneself.** Deciding to walk in fear of God produces a better life down here; it results in a life greatly blessed by the Lord. *Without the fear of the Lord, we cannot please God.* (Isaiah 66:1-2) ■

References: *The Sermon Notebook; All About God; The Fear of God; Old Truth; Rational Christianity; Our Daily Bread.*

The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding. (Job 27:28)

**MISSIONLINE**

**LIVING WATERS MISSION TO INDIA**

LPPC has again partnered with Living Waters for the World to install a clean water system overseas. The first installation was in 2007 on the man-made, floating islands of the Uros people near Puno, Peru. This second installation was in January 2010 at a Bridge of Hope Ministries school and orphanage near Hyderabad, India.

Kary and Nanette LaFors from LPPC led the installation team of nine members: *Rick Moyer and Karen Keiser, First Presbyterian Church, Pottstown; Randall and Dee Swan, Presbyterian Church of King City, MO.; Jim and Robin Gates and their grandson, First Methodist Church of Wenatchee, WA; Max Weller, Maple Valley, WA.; and Gabriel Devathala, founder and president of Bridge of Hope Ministries, and an Elder at Central Presbyterian Church in Norristown.* The group was hosted by Gabriel whose home is in Vikarabad, India, and Srinji Rao, vice president of Bridge of Hope. Prior to the trip they reached the necessary covenant agreement between the parties involved as to how the system would be installed and maintained.

The people met by the team were gracious and welcoming, and the children were happy and excited to be a part of the clean water solution. Although a few problems were encountered, such as getting backup power to overcome power outages, the installation went well. The Health, Hygiene, and Spirituality training that accompanies all such installations was a great success. For three days team members taught teachers in the morning; then the teachers taught students in the afternoon. The system will generate 300 gallons of clean water per hour, enough to meet the needs of an adjacent village as well as the school and orphanage.

**Clean Water U**, sponsored by the Synod of the Living Waters in the southeast states, conducts a four-day camp to train people on how to install the clean water systems and how to train a community on the health, hygiene, and spiritual aspects of clean water. There is also a course for leaders of these international missions.

Kary and Nanette have both attended the camp. The mission of Clean Water U is based on **believing that Jesus Christ is the living water for our bodies and souls and that we are called to help people of the world who are striving to obtain clean water.**

*1.3 billion people in the world today do not have access to clean water. As many as three million people die each year from water-borne diseases. Sadly, most victims are children under the age of five, most of whom are under two years of age. Clean Water U points out that Biblical references to water are numerous and profound. On their web site [livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://livingwatersfortheworld.org) is a list of the more than 300 locations in 23 countries where installations have already been completed.*

The installation team expresses its thanks to the Pastors, Session, the Serving Committee, and the entire LPPC congregation for their prayers and financial support to make this mission possible. ■



**When You Say... God Tells You**

When you say... **"I can't solve this..."** God tells you *"I will direct your path."* Proverbs 3:5-6

When you say... **"It's impossible..."** God tells you *"Everything is possible."* Luke 18:27

When you say... **"I feel all alone..."** God tells you *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* Hebrews 13:5

When you say... **"I can't do it..."** God tells you *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."* Philippians 4:13

When you say... **"I don't deserve forgiveness..."** God tells you *"I have forgiven you."* 1 John 1-9 - Romans 8:1

When you say... **"I am afraid..."** God tells you *"Do not fear, for I am with you; I will strengthen you and help you."* Isaiah 41:10

When you say... **"I am tired..."** God tells you *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Matthew 11:28-30

When you say... **"No one really loves me..."** God tells you *"I love you."* John 3:16 - John 13:34

When you say... **"I don't know how to go on..."** God tells you *"I will show you the path."*

When you say... **"What path does God have for me...?"** God tells you *"My beloved son Jesus Christ."* 1 Timothy 2:5 - Acts 4:12 - John 3:16

...And when you want to know everything else that God wants to tell you...

**Read the Bible.** 2 Timothy 3:15-17

*From the Internet*