



Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

Newsletter

Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

Lent 2015



December Baptisms at Shepherd of the City



Day of Prayer
April 25, 2015
Featured Speaker
Rev Kurt Reinhart
(details on back)



Lutheran Youth Corps volunteers and pastors on the steps of Shepherd

Lenten Love

by Rev Kieselowsky

Director

My sister-in-law, a nurse, recently asked my daughters to identify the main job of the heart. Without skipping a beat, my 3-year-old piped up: "To love!"

Her understanding of human anatomy needs some work, but I was pleased that she recognizes in a preschool way how God created people in His image, and they reflect His image in their generosity and thoughtfulness toward their neighbors. God felt so strongly about it that He included commands to care for and love one's neighbors.

Lenten practice of the church includes alms-giving to care for the less fortunate. In reflecting the goodness and liberality of God Himself, we fulfill our purpose—and it feels good to love our neighbors as ourselves.

As Pastor DeGroot proclaims the Gospel of Christ to families and individuals,

immigrants and native Philadelphians, he finds many opportunities to care for those in need. He and his wife Melissa have organized food distribution of donated food from Trader Joe's each week and have closets of clothing available to those who need it. Pastor DeGroot refers people to social agencies to help meet needs of housing and employment support. By trying to meet the physical needs of the people he meets, Pastor DeGroot exemplifies the giving spirit we all pray to have.

In the end, however, we cannot guarantee that this life will be free from hardship and toil, so the benefits of physical assistance must exist within the work of the church.

We *are* able to guarantee the spiritual benefit of sending a loving pastor to offer people the ultimate good in the forgiveness of sins and liberty from the bondage of sin.

May Christ continue to use us to generously care for those in need, both in body and soul,

especially this Lenten season.

Please consider how you might join us in loving our neighbors in Philadelphia. 

What's New

- We look forward to hosting a summer vicar in 2015, made possible by the LC-MS Director of Urban Ministry's office.
- We are laying the foundation for a weekly Sunday evening outreach service in Center City, beginning with a core group of university students and young professionals.

Please Pray

- That Christ would sustain the faith of those baptized and confirmed at Shepherd of the City by Pastor DeGroot.
- That Christ would draw many to the new Center City Sunday evening outreach service.
- For funds to repair the roof and plumbing at Shepherd and center house as we prepare for a summer vicar.

Christ Graciously Grows His Church

By Rev DeGroot
Missionary Pastor

Life in the city continues to be wonderfully active, filled with many great opportunities for mercy work and Gospel proclamation. Thank you for your continued support of our Lord's gracious work here.

November was a wonderful month! We concluded our third ten-week Adult Information/New Members class with the reception of a mother and her two children, ages 10 and 13, as members of Shepherd of the City. While our growth has been measured in small steps, we have seen increased interest in classes from current members as well people inquiring 'off the street.'

In December, I had the joy and privilege of baptizing three young

attendees: Brandon, age 10, son of a new member (Dec 3), an infant, Savannah (Dec 14), and Marlon, affectionately known as "Tank," the young son of a new member (Dec 21).

During December, we also had an Advent dinner and prayer service mid-week. Most regular Sunday attendees made it for our midweek services, and we grew together through our time of fellowship and evening prayer. We held both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services to celebrate the joyous incarnation of our Savior.

Since Epiphany, we have been holding another Adult Information class with four potential new adult members, who also bring three young children.

Finally, we will welcome two outside congregations for community outreach in February and March. One group will assist with a community dinner and the other, a work day to enhance the property. 🙏

Youth Corps Pilot

By Melissa DeGroot

Last August 11-17, the LC-MS Office of Youth Ministry collaborated with Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries to launch its **Lutheran Youth Corps** pilot program on-site at Shepherd. Thirteen young adults (ages 16 to 20), along with four LC-MS pastors, spent a week in NE Philly.

Each day began with morning prayer and a pot of coffee and the week ended with Divine Service.

Neighborhood Canvas

Rev Carlos Hernandez presented a program to systematically research a community's needs called *Gospel Seeds*. The youth and pastors later went into the neighborhood to introduce themselves to residents and local businesses, asking people about community needs. Reduced

crime and child supervision (after-school care) were needs repeated by many in the neighborhood.

Mercy and Service

Rev Steve Schave presented to the group an overview of the "Theology of Mercy," and Rev Ross Johnson provided information about the synod's Disaster Relief. Then followed a property work day.

Thursday was a full day of off-site service organization visits: (a) to Eliza Shirley House, a women's shelter, to interact with residents and their children; (b) to famous Love Park to pass out food bags to the homeless; (c) to a retirement home called Paul's Run.

The week embodied our confession of faith through *Witness, Mercy and Life Together*. Our son, Knox, still affectionately refers to the youth as "our friends." We hope to work with these Youth Corps friends again. 🙏

Day of Prayer to Mark Shepherd Two-Year Anniversary

Good Shepherd Sunday marks two years of regular services at Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church in Northeast Philadelphia, and we will celebrate with a day of prayer on April 25.

We will gather to hear **Rev Kurt Reinhart**, a member of the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Church-Canada with 15 years experience in the ministry, explain the biblical teaching on prayer and how we should converse with God along with our fellow Christians.



Please Join Us Day of Prayer

Featured Speaker

Rev Kurt Reinhart

Saturday, April 25, 2015

10:00am-3:00pm

Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church
7200 Castor Ave, Philadelphia

The topic of prayer is often neglected and misunderstood, but it is an integral part of Pastors DeGroot and Kieselowsky's interaction with people of the city.

Because it is so vitally important to petition Christ that His Word and Spirit would convert hearts, we will spend time in prayer for the people of Philadelphia and for Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries as it continues work at Shepherd and begins a new Sunday evening outreach service in Center City. 🙏