



# LA TIJERA'S DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

La Tijera  
United Methodist Church  
& Center for Children

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## Is that All There Is?

We are now in the season of waiting . . . of preparation . . . of finding our way home again. During Advent, our focus is on preparing for the arrival of God Incarnate. So, how do we prepare? The messages we receive at this time of year tell us to prepare by buying things, by decorating with lots of tinsel and lights, and to listen to Christmas carols. . . all the time. These things aren't bad, in fact, they are pretty fun and festive—but is that all there is? And if that's all there is, what happens when the holiday season is over? How can we avoid feeling let down and deflated when the last gift has been opened and the last carol sung?

What would happen if we thought of Advent not as a means to an end, not as a beginning with a finite end, but as part of a continuing journey? What if we entered this holiday season not with our eyes fixed only on Jesus'

birth, but as a reminder that each day is a preparation for realizing the miracle that is God and the gift of Jesus to the world? What if we lived the promise of Advent each day of our lives?

This Advent season, you are invited to take a journey Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. During the weeks before Christmas, we will be exploring "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem." This Advent study shines fresh light on the vital story of Jesus' birth. Look deeper into the life and birth of Christ and gain insight into your own journey as you follow in the footsteps of Mary, Joseph and others on their journey to Bethlehem. All are welcome to walk with us.

Take time this season to breathe. Take time to enjoy silence and gentle song. On Sunday, December 4th at 6:30 p.m., enter a time of quiet reflection at The Gathering—An Evening of Sacred

Song & Prayer. Take time to embrace the holy.

This Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m., all are invited to celebrate, sing, and reflect on the birth of Christ. This year, 50% of the offering collected at worship will be donated to the suicide prevention program at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Facility.

Is that all there is? The answer is a responding "no!" That's not all there is. Come and experience the journey with La Tijera United Methodist Church this season, and all the seasons to come.

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.

Bobby, 7 years old

## SAY "CHEESE" . . .

**On Saturday, December 10th starting at 9:00 a.m., "My Beautiful Photo" will be taking family photographs! What a great gift to send to loved ones or to hang on your wall! The cost is \$25.00 for the photo CD and the sessions will take place every 10 minutes starting at 9:00 a.m.**

**Come out and capture a moment in time with a family photograph!**

## Dates to Remember . . .

**12/4/11**—The Gathering—An Evening of Song & Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

**12/6/11**—Health Rhythms Drum Circle at 7:00 p.m.

**12/10/11**—My Beautiful Photo sessions start at 9:00 a.m.

**12/11/11**—Westchester Christmas Parade at 2:00 pm

**12/15/11**—Center Winter Performance at 5:00 p.m.

**12/19-22/11**—Extended Care Program open only with sufficient enrollment

**12/24/11**—Christmas Eve Family Worship Service at 6:30 p.m.

**12/25/11**—Christmas Day

Worship at 9:30 a.m.

**12/23/11—1/2/12**—The Center will be closed.

**12/31/11**—New Year's Eve  
**1/1/12**—New Year's Day  
Worship Service

**1/3-6/12**—Extended Care open only with sufficient enrollment



The kids decorate the altar



## The Confirmation Class Turns Ordinary into Extraordinary!

On Sunday, November 20th, six of our youth were confirmed! Congratulations to Isabelle De Rego, Fiona De Rego, Kane Eddington, Kallan Eddington, Kyla Eddington and Keira Eddington.

Their journey was an intense one, filled with many questions, much discussion, a lot of self-reflection and exploration, and, of course, tons of laughter. They explored their United Methodist roots and traditions, deep questions of faith, and the teachings of John Wesley using the Credo curriculum. We had Holy Spirit paper boat races, the “balance walk of life” with Nerf arrows being shot at the class, and

studied Transformers (not the movie, but Christians who have transformed the world!) We also ate “liturgical doughnuts” full of yummy liturgical goodness!

Needless to say, the kids were amazing, and their worship service was full of passion and joy.

The confirmation process is not an ending to a journey, it is a public profession of their faith and the beginning

to a life-long quest to explore what it means to be a follower of Christ.

La Tijera United Methodist Church is proud to have been a part of their faith journey and look forward to all the wisdom and insight they will continue to share with us . . .and the world.

They are our Transformers of the future!



The Confirmation Class of 2011!

## Mayola’s Corner

The winter holidays are here—everyone rushing to start or finish their holiday wish list of special gifts for loves ones, friends, and family. Some of you may be planning to spend special time with friends or family far away, but none of these things are as special as giving our love and those things made by little hands (our children).

When children work hard on their creations and say it’s for mommy, their faces glow with delight. Although we may not always know what it is, we know that it was made with lots of love and from the heart. I hope we stop this holi-

day season and let our gifts be from the heart too. A kind word, an uplifting gesture can go a long way to another along our journey. Our goal this year is to give from the heart to the Children’s Hospital and the Food Pantry. We will be collecting food and toys for those that are less fortunate. If you wish to donate to either of these charitable organizations, please place your items in the donation boxes by each classroom or in the office.

Our silent auction went very well. Thanks to all who donated and participated—we raised \$674.00. The Westchester Christmas Parade

will be held Sunday, December 11th at 2pm on the corner of Manchester and Lincoln. We are asking for volunteers to come out and march with us. Bring your wagons, strollers, bicycles, and good walking shoes to represent La Tijera.

Don’t forget our “Winter Concert” on December 15th at 5:00 p.m. with Pastor Lyda. As always we know it will be a hit. So come out and support the children as they dazzle you with song and dance.

The staff and I wish you a safe and joyous holiday season and we hope to see all of you 2012.

## Room 3 News

Hello Parents!

November has been a month of giving thanks for all we have and spending time with our precious families. I hope you all had an awesome Thanksgiving! I would like to welcome Noah Gonzalez, Delilah Shields and Madeleine Lucy to Room 3. This month, Room 3’s curriculum is full of excitement and Christmas projects! We will have fun Christmas songs and stories that our little ones will enjoy. Our class will continue with our regular academic

activities.

Each week, we focus on a letter, number, color, and shape. Homework folders are sent home each Friday.



Lots of great food to share!

## Thank you!

We would like to thank the following businesses for their donations to our Silent Auction:

- Sonja’s Scrapbook Spot
- Gymboree Play & Music
- Olive It
- Chalet Edelweiss
- Pete Frio Chevron
- Truxtons



## Seasons Greetings from Stage 1

Hello everyone! Stage I is full of excitement this month as our babies continue to learn new skills at such a rapid pace every single day! Some can crawl, some can pull up, and all are getting around the room, exploring new horizons and continuing to excite and surprise us as they change from day to day!

We'd like to give a special thank you to our parents for the wonderful participation in our International Dinner and Silent Auction! We had such a great time and the very best part of the evening was the program put on by the preschoolers, Pre-K, and Extended Care Kids. It truly warmed our hearts to see them recite and sing their songs—they are so amazing!!!

As we enter the holiday season, Stage I wishes health and happiness to all our La Tijera families, teachers and their families, and wish peace to all throughout the world.

Teachers Kris, Melanie, Janet & Shay

**I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.**

**Charles Dickens**



Extended Care Kids lead us in song

## News from Transition I & Stage II

### Transition I

Greetings! We hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The children continue to enjoy experiencing the fall change of season, both inside and out. We are doing activities that relate to the weather and are associated with the upcoming holidays. They are having a great time with all their activities! Kudos to our Room Parent, Ms. Shay.

Many wishes for a blessed holiday season—Ms. Chestina

### Stage II

Turkey time is gone and now it's the time for Christmas—the season to spend time with family, friends and all the people you love. We had a wonderful turnout for our Annual International Potluck. Thank you for coming and bringing such delicious food. It was a pleasure to spend the evening with you and your family. We take pride in having such a supportive and enthusiastic parents—you help make our school a wonderful place to be! Thanks again for all the donations for the Silent Auction baskets.

Our curriculum this month is:

Phonics: J, K, L; Math: 7 & 8; Shape: rectangle; Color: white; Holidays: Christmas, Kwanzaa, Chanukah, and arts & crafts.

We welcome Sebastian Martin to our class. It is always nice to see new faces. Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! See you next year—Ho Ho Ho!

Ms. Rosy, Ms. Chely, & Ms. Nancy

## Happy Holidays from Stage III

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Time flies and we are about to celebrate our beautiful holidays—we've already finished Thanksgiving! Thank God for our many blessings this year!

We have a wonderful and fun curriculum for this holiday season. Vocabulary for this month will be: Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and food. Shape: rectangle; Color: white; Number: 3; Letters G, H, I.

Our little angels will be practicing making scribbles, brushing their teeth, buttoning up and unbuttoning, complete simple puzzles, and to walk in a line. **Please bring a toothbrush for your child.**

Thank you so much to all our wonderful parents for



Singing at the International Potluck!

your continued support. Our Silent Auction would not have been a success without your help.

Have a marvelous holiday and a Happy New Year!

Ms. Marisol, Ms. Sharon & Ms. Claudia

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**We're on the Web!**  
**Latijeraumc.org**

**What if church was a verb?**  
**Re-think church . . . Re-think possibilities**

Advent is a time of anticipation. What are you anticipating this year? Instead of "anticipating" a too large Christmas gift bill or a too small bank account (both of which I am familiar with!) why don't we anticipate the welcome home that the coming Christ child offers us?

There is, for each of us, a "homey" place where some part of our soul longs to return to. We all get a bit homesick at Christmas time—even if we are where we consider home to be. We get homesick for our childhood homes. We get homesick for the homes we left behind. We get homesick for the homes we never had.

But what if home is where our soul is lifted up and our spirit is fulfilled? What if our homesickness is as much about our God-home as our earthly-home? What if our coming home is living with and in the presence of God? What if coming home means being wrapped in the God of love?

## **From Lyda . . .**

In a world where so many people are telling us that we are going to fail, home is the place where God has faith in us. And faith is fighting back against all of the negativity, emptiness and loneliness.

Home is where God holds out hope for you when all else have lost it. Home is



where you are loved, even when you aren't perfect. Home is where you see

wholeness and holiness in others, even as you see their flaws.

Love is the language spoken at home. And home is where love can keep us warm in a very cold world.

What if home is more than a place that we go to, but something that resonates deep within our hearts and souls, calling us to a place that is beyond ourselves?

Advent offers us an invitation to return to God's presence, to embrace the wonderful future that God has in store for us, to dwell in God's kingdom here on earth. It is an invitation not just to come home for Christmas, but to really come home.

In this season of Advent, get ready, anticipate and prepare . . . to come home.

Don't forget . . . Our Taize-inspired worship experience—The Gathering—An Evening of Sacred Song & Prayer will be at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 4th. Our Health Rhythms Drum Circle is on Tuesday, December 6th at 7:00 p.m.—it's free, fun and good for you!

Join us on Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m. for a family-friendly magical evening—and all are welcome Christmas morning at 9:30 a.m. for a Christmas Day worship celebration!

"Friend" us on Facebook—spread the word about La Tijera United Methodist Church!