

# Neighborhood News

The Neighborhood Learning Center's monthly newsletter

## The Director's Corner

Marcie Peterson, Director



The month of December promises to be a very busy month for all of us. We will be scurrying about shopping, decorating, planning, and partying. It is a joyous, yet exhausting season for most. And it can be frustrating as well, especially when trying to find the perfect gift for that special someone on your list.

In today's society, we are surrounded by a sense of entitlement. It is all about ME and what makes ME happy. Part of what makes the Christmas season so wonderful is that it is a season for giving and doing for the good of others instead of me, me, me! Therein is the challenge for those of us with little ones, who, by nature, are ego centered. Since it is true that children learn much from the actions and gratitude of the adults around them, we might consider the following alternative Christmas gift suggestions that I found:

- To an enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, our heart.
- To others, service.
- To all, charity.
- To oneself, respect.
- To every child, a good example.

Christmas day is a day of joy and gladness. As Pastor Jessica reminded us in her newsletter article, "SLOW down Christmas in a way to make hearts more welcoming to the mystery of God coming down in LOVE." And may you pass these gifts on to your children.

Christmas blessings to you and your family from all of us here at the NLC!

God Bless,  
Ms. Marcie

## December Highlights

**December 8:**  
Christmas Program:  
4:00pm for 2s and under, 4:30pm for 3s, pre-K and Kindergarteners

**December 12:**  
Poinsettia Day

**December 13:**  
Polar Express & PJ Day!

**December 17:**  
Parents' Night Out  
5:30-9:00pm

**December 20:**  
Ugly Sweater Day

**December 22-30:**  
LCPS Closed, NLC OPEN (note exceptions below)

**December 23:**  
Happy Birthday Jesus Cake

NLC CLOSSES at 2pm

**December 26:**  
NLC CLOSED

**January 2:**  
NLC CLOSED

## This Month at School...

December's theme is "Away in a Manger," and we focus each week on a different aspect of the Advent and ultimately Christmas story: the animals at the manger, the star, Baby Jesus, and Christmas Gifts.

- The Annual Christmas Program will be held on Thursday the 8th. The 2s and under will have their performance at 4:00pm; the 3s, Pre-K and Kindergarteners will have their program at 4:30. Both of these performances will be held in the sanctuary. The after-school kids will meet in the basement for their own holiday party!
- Send the kids to the NLC in their PJs on the 13th for Polar Express Day! At 10am the children will gather to be greeted by our very own conductor (a volunteer for this super fun job is needed—speak to Ms. Marcie if you're interested) who will punch their tickets and welcome them "aboard." Watching the Polar Express movie while snuggled in PJs with all their friends is a highlight of the Christmas season!
- Parents' Night Out will be held on the 17th from 5:30-9:00pm. With the stores open late, it's a great chance to get some shopping (or wrapping!) done! Ms. Sarah Leo and Ms. Susan will host this evening—movie title and menu to be announced.
- Ugly Sweater Day is on the 20th—homemade or store-bought, break out that Christmas cheer!
- The 23rd we will celebrate Jesus' birthday with a birthday cake served after lunch!
- Please note that the **NLC closes at 2pm on the 23rd and is closed on the 26th. We will also be closed on January 2nd.** Our school age program will run throughout LCPS' winter break (with the exceptions of the closures listed above). Please let us know if your child will be attending so we can plan accordingly!

*Don't forget to **vote** for the NLC for Best of Loudoun in Childcare! Please visit [LoudounTimes.com](http://LoudounTimes.com) and click on the "2017 Best of Loudoun" button on the right side of the page. Thanks!*

## Snow Days Approaching

All NLC families and Staff members will be notified via email and text message regarding NLC closings and delays due to weather. For parents/guardians, these messages will be sent to the cell phone and email address noted in our database for "Guardian 1". Please ensure we have the correct information on record!

Keep in mind, our closings and delays follow the Federal Government, NOT Loudoun County Public Schools.

You are also able to access the following website to

determine the closing & delay status of the Federal Government: [www.opm.gov/status](http://www.opm.gov/status)

## Winter Weather is Here!

Please remember to send your child to school in layers—unless it is below freezing we take them out to play. Gloves and hats are a must!

Please also update the extra clothing in your child's cubby to reflect the changing weather. Don't forget to label everything with their name!

## Staff Spotlight

Hello friends, Let me introduce myself. I'm Toni Kontos and, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for welcoming and supporting me into the NLC family, which I now have been a part of since October 2016. I am currently learning from each of you and from all of the children and hope to have a home here for a long time. Thank you again for your kindness and support.



## The Chaplain's Corner: Practicing Advent in the Home

Everybody's rushing towards to Christmas, so you may even wonder—why Advent anyway? What are we to do with Advent really?

We all know that Christmas has been slowly sneaking in. The stores have been pumping Christmas since Halloween. Yet, the church is saying slow down. Prepare your heart, prepare the way for Jesus to come.

So, how can we practice Advent in a Christmas Season world? How can we work on cultivating the expectation and anticipating when we know what we are expecting?

My first recommendation is to use your Advent wreath, use the Advent Devotional, and use other intentional practices to SLOW down Christmas in a way to make hearts more welcoming to the mystery of God coming down in Love.

First, in my family we keep the Advent wreath on our kitchen table. We eat dinner only with the light of the

Advent candles. It is pretty dark when we begin but slowly we watch the light grow. When we light our candles, we read our Advent devotional and say our prayer. Our kids anticipate this practice each night by turning out the lights, getting the matches, and taking turns lighting the candles.

Last year, I wanted to have a practice to keep our eyes and focus on Jesus each day. I purchased a quilted angel from Marshalls with 25 pockets on her body. (This is an Advent Calendar.) In each pocket, I put two pieces of chocolate and a verse from the Christmas story as told by Luke. We began each day with the reading....slowly getting closer to the announcement that Jesus was born!

This year our Advent theme at St. Andrew is "Seeking Jesus through the Senses." Think about using taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight as a way to allow yourselves to slow down, to wait, and to anticipate what we know will come but yet can come to us as a surprise once more that God is coming to us in the Prince of Peace, our Emmanuel.

Grace,

Pastor Jessica

## This Month at St. Andrew...

**Weekly Worship:** Saturdays 5pm; Sundays 10am

**NOTE:** Child care is available at all worship services for the littlest ones. For children age preschool and up, Sunday School is provided during Sunday worship services—your child starts the service sitting with you, will leave for Sunday School and then will return to you before the service concludes. The first Sunday of every month is Family First Sunday, when children remain in the service and their joyful noises are welcomed!

**December 3rd—"Music with a Cause" Concert Series—Handel's "Messiah" - 7:30pm**—The Loudoun Chorale will sing this beautiful concert of peace and hope. All ticket and art sales benefitting The Community Coalition for Haiti. Tickets are \$15 at the door, Seniors \$12, age 17 and under free.

**18th—DC TOP Trip—Open to All Ages**—We will prep at 11am with a 12:30pm departure. Visit the Winter Weather Tree for needed DC TOP donation items.

**December 24th—Christmas Eve Services —5:00 and 8:00pm**—Join us for a family friendly service at 5pm and a more traditional service at 8pm.

## Reminders...

We hope that you read the weekly "Friday Footnotes" which include information about the past week, the coming week's adventures, as well as a friendly reminder. Here is a reminder recap:

- The NLC is a NUT FREE facility. Please don't bring anything containing peanuts or tree nuts into the facility.
- If your child has special food needs that require food from home, please refrain from entering the kitchen. Leave your labeled items (child name, date and contents) on the kitchen counter; they will be quickly stored.
- Please check the Lost & Found for missing belongings.
- If you need gift ideas for your favorite teachers, see the "Staff Favorites" binder on the Front Desk.



# December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Monthly Theme: <i>Away in a Manger</i>			1 <i>Music</i>	2 Chapel	3
4 <i>Animals at the Manger</i>	5 Chapel	6	7 <i>Music</i>	8 <i>Christmas Program</i> 4:00 & 4:30 <i>Music</i>	9 <i>Yoga</i>	10
11 <i>Follow the Star</i>	12 <i>Poinsettia Day</i> Chapel	13 <i>Polar Express &amp; PJ Day</i>	14 <i>Music</i>	15 <i>Music</i>	16 <i>Yoga</i>	17 <i>Parents' Night Out</i> 5:30-9:00pm
18 <i>Baby Jesus</i>	19 Chapel	20 <i>Ugly Sweater Day</i>	21 <i>Music</i>	22 LCPS CLOSED <i>Music</i>	23 <i>Happy Birthday Jesus Cake</i> NLC Closes @ 2 <i>Yoga</i>	24
25 <i>Christmas Gifts</i>	26 NLC CLOSED	27	28 LCPS CLOSED <i>Music</i>	29 <i>Music</i>	30 <i>Yoga</i>	31

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By Bill Keane



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