The holidays bring for many of us a variety of emotions: Christmas and New Year’s holidays are like riding a roller coaster; a time when emotions can be very wide-ranging. We may ask at some point: What does it all mean anyway? Christmas takes us to the heights of bliss, but then we at some point come down. Sitting at breakfast with a cup of coffee I found myself staring at our Christmas tree. With all the gifts gone it seemed barren and well—lonely— and I realized there was a bit of a void in me too. Then, I looked at the comics in the newspaper with a focus on the Family Circus. I think it was little Billy who said to his mother, “Santa didn’t bring all the gifts I asked for; How many days till my birthday?”

My guess is that there may be a little bit off Billy in each of us. When all the gifts have been opened, we are still yearning for something more. Beyond the tree, that other Gift begs our attention, the gift of the Incarnation, the Word made Flesh. A Savior is born for us. This is not a gift that we may have consciously asked for, but that saving Presence is an irrevocable and a powerful expression of the gift of God’s love. The angels spoke of the gift, the Good
News was announced to the Shepherds, and the Wise Men followed a Star. In the silence of that Holy Night God has given us and our world a gift that keeps on giving. Yes, and the Gift is for all who will accept it.

What are some of the gifts the Savior offers to us? In The Only Necessary Thing, a compilation of writings of Henri Nouwen on prayer, the topic of Action in the House of God is addressed. We are told we come to the House of God for prayer, and action leads us back out into the world. All human action is in response to what happens to us in God’s House—and I would add—and in the hearts of all who believe. The insight that came to me in this work of Nouwen is that it is not up to us to restore a broken order in the world because in Christ (the Savior) Order has been restored. Our response to this gift is not zealously to go out into the world to overcome divisions, but as Nouwen asserts, we are to witness to “a celebration of an already established unity.”

What I want to suggest to you from what is admittedly a muddled effort to share the wisdom of a sage is this: Our work as disciples is not to create order nor to create unity. In the Incarnation God has restored order, in Christ God has restored unity. We are meant to be witnesses, to share the Good News. In our own hearts we are simply invited to claim, to receive this Gift that keeps on giving. Our calling is not a burden to be carried around, but the gift of a loving savior to be shared.

Rev. Dan Krutz

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In Sympathy

We recently learned that Louis William McHardy passed away on May 1st, 2020, at the age of 89 years. Louis was a member of the LIC Commission on Criminal Justice, where he served faithfully as a consultant from shortly after his arrival here from Reno in 1999, until 2017, when his failing health curtailed his activities. Even after that point, he and his wife continued to support the LIC.

His obituary link can be found at: https://obits.theadvocate.com/obituaries/theadvocate/obituary.aspx?n=louis-william-mchardy&pid=196146251&fhid=17443

Our prayers remain with his wife, Jackie, and all of the family.

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Week of Prayer – events listing needed

If you haven’t scheduled an event yet, please start the process!

2021 Theme:
Abide in my love...
you shall bear much fruit

Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: January 18 - January 25, 2021
The theme for this coming year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is: "Abide in my love...you shall bear much fruit," from John 15.

Find out more and how to order supporting materials, at: https://geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian Unity/theme_announcement_2021.html

We ask that all member LIC churches take the lead in planning for 2021 Week of Prayer services in their communities. Please let us know as soon as you know of events occurring in your area, so that we may post them in the LIC newsletters and/or on the LIC website.

Rev. Ron Sutto retires

Rev. Sutto has been the Judicatory leader to the LIC representing the Presbytery of South Louisiana since 2010. We wish Rev. Sutto a happy retirement.

News Article -- Source: The Presbytery of South Louisiana e-newsletter December 10, 2020

Ron Sutto retires from PSL after 10 years as General Presbyter

Dear Ones:

Since 1976 I have attended more presbytery meetings that I can count. A few are memorable: approved for ordination, leaving and being received by presbytery for a new call and so on. However, none of them will replace the Dec 5, 2020 meeting.

As I sit in my office, reflecting on what and how to share with you what is in my heart it is nearly impossible. What I remember most, are not the major events, or natural disasters we have been through, rather it is the thousands of memories that came from individual interactions with you. The one-on-one times we shared, COM process questions answered, property questions, polity questions, the "just checking on you" conversations. The gallons of coffee, iced tea, and yes adult beverages shared over anxious and tearful conversations, as well as those happy times. In my mind and heart, I replay them all. How does one say thank you for allowing me into your life? How does one say thank you for sharing your inner thoughts? One cannot. It is a Holy Moment. A divine mystery, truly a "God Thing" to be cherished as long as I draw breath.

Sitting here at 12909 Old Hammond Hwy looking out my office window upon the parking lot, I see not an empty slab of concrete; I see a parking lot filled with faces. Faces that I see often, faces I see on occasion, and faces that now transcend time and space. I see you!!!

Gratitude and sadness fill my heart; Gratitude because God brought you into my life, sadness because, as the preacher in ecclesiastics said: "To everything there is a season" and for me the season is done.

And so, I will pack up my John Deere collection, will re-stack my Dallas Cowboys nesting dolls, and punch the exit button on the alarm code one last time. And as I go through the door, with the alarm sound moving me along I will say, "Thank you dear God, for every soul that has accompanied me on this journey as General Presbyter/Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of South Louisiana." As I make that final left turn on Old Hammond Hwy, I will pump my fist, and shout at the top of my lungs,

"I AM SINFULLY PROUD TO BE PRESBYTERIAN"

Go with God, beloved ones,
Ron

Friends mail out and end of year giving to consider

In November, the LIC sent out a Friends of the LIC postal mailing. Several people have responded with donations - for which we are most grateful! If you did not receive a mailing and would like to be on our list, we would be happy to add you. Please contact us at lainterchurch@aol.com. You can also easily contribute through the LIC website at: http://www.lainterchurch.org/contribute/index.htm
We do hope that you will consider the LIC in your end-of-year giving. Items postmarked by December 31st are eligible for tax recording in 2020. An IRS acceptable receipt will be sent to you. The LIC is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization and we are dependent upon our supporters. Thank you!

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**Offering thanks to our recent contributors – we couldn't make it without you all!**

The majority of the LIC operating income is contributed through the leadership of our member Judicatories, whom we deeply appreciate and depend upon. Additionally, we depend upon partners to supplement the needs. Our thanks to the below contributors:

*Contributions received from November 30, 2020 through December 29, 2020:*

**FRIENDS OF THE LIC contributions:** Rev. Dr. Wayne Carter; Jackie McHardy; Roy Lilly; Ann Romero; Sterling & Maggie Millet; Monte Hurley; Donna Crider; Don Cottrill; and St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Houma.

**Sabbatical/Continuing Education fund for the LIC Executive Director:** Penrose and Madeline St. Amant

Thank you all!

Please pray for this ecumenical ministry. If you would like to help financially, please mail contributions to: Louisiana Interchurch Conference, 527 N. Blvd., 4th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, or contribute online via PayPal at [http://www.lainterchurch.org/contribute/index.htm](http://www.lainterchurch.org/contribute/index.htm).

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**Board Meeting Dates to Calendar**

**Fall Board meeting dates:**

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<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>Sept. 20-21, Houma, LA</td>
<td>CHANGED to September 27-28, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Sept. 19-20, Alexandria, LA</td>
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**Annual Assembly meeting dates:**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>March 1-2, Lake Charles, LA</td>
<td>51st Annual Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>March 14-15, Baton Rouge, LA</td>
<td>52nd Annual Assembly</td>
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“*To live the faith we hold in common*”

*President: The Most Rev. Douglas Deshotel; President Elect: The Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton; Executive Director: Fr. Dan Krutz*