



# PARENTS' POST

E.L.P of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church



December 2011

## From the Director

This month of December is already here and the Christmas season is upon us. We, at ELP are planning to “de-stress” our program during the Christmas season. We are taking a calm approach to the season and will spend time reading, creating decorations, baking cookies, singing songs and most importantly learning about the birth of Christ.

During the next few weeks, please take time to give your children the true gift of time and yourself. Take time to sit quietly and admire the tree lights or take a walk or drive to see the outdoor decorations. Let your children help with the wrapping or baking or making the Christmas cards. They want to be a part of the preparation. Think back when you were a child to those special Christmas memories. I’ll bet the memory isn’t one of your favorite toy but of the fun times spent with family and friends. Your family will thank you for it!

Merry Christmas!!  
Rita

## Mark Your Calendar

**Nativity Animals Visit**  
December 6, 7, 8,

**Last day of ELP in 2011**  
December 16

**First day of ELP for 2012**  
January 2, 2012

## ELP Break

No Classes  
December 17 through January 1.  
Have a wonderful and safe holiday!  
Merry Christmas!!!

## Portraits

If you have not had an opportunity to view your photos, please stop by the office by December 9. You can view them and purchase if interested.

Don’t miss this opportunity. The photos are precious and will make wonderful Christmas gifts.

*Peace on Earth*

## Registration 2012-13

Registration Packets for next year, 2010-12, will go out in January, watch your child’s backpack.

**Registration will be due by Noon on Thursday, February 9 by Noon.**

Science Fun will be offered to all PreK and Transition students. It is a hands-on, science based class which is offered Tues. and Thurs. afternoons and Fri. mornings. It is a favorite among our students.

2012-13 Public Registration will be held Thurs., February 186 at 6:30 pm.

Tell your friends!

*Sending you  
Christmas  
Wishes!*

## Book Review

Humphrey’s First Christmas by Carol Heyer is a great children’s book for the Christmas Season. The illustrations are beautiful and the story will bring smiles and tears to all who read. Check out your local bookstore for a peek at the sweet Christmas story.



## PVO News

All ELP Parents are members of PVO . PVO stands for Parent Volunteer Organization. Our Parent Volunteer Coordinators are Tera Turnbull AND Jacklyn Smejkal

Thank you for your help in November by supplying the fish sticks and bread for our unique Thanksgiving Picnic. Thanks also to those of you who were able to come and enjoy the puppet show and help serve.

Some opportunities for December are: Come and enjoy the live nativity (camel and donkey rides) Dec. 6—8! You will be hearing from your room moms concerning the Christmas parties this month.

Thanks for your help and support and have WONDERFUL HOLIDAYS!!!!

## Away in a Manger-Live Nativity

ELP will have a live nativity again this year. We will even be having camel and donkey rides for the children. This hands-on experience is sure to be a memory for your children and will hopefully help put the true meaning of Christmas in their hearts. The Nativity will be here on December 6—8. Parents and siblings are welcome to join us. Classes will follow their chapel schedule.



## Chapel Schedule

Jesus' Birthday Parties and Nativity Animals will follow chapel schedule this month

### Tuesday:

Older Ducks 9:15-9:45  
Older Robins 9:45-10:15  
Owls & Bluebirds 10:15-10:45

### Wednesday:

Owls & Bluebirds 9:45-10:15  
Parrots 10:15-10:45  
ESL 10:45-11:15  
Cardinals 11:15-11:45

### Thursday:

Young Ducks 9:15-9:45  
Young Robins 9:45-10:15  
AM Penguins 10:15-10:45  
Owls & Bluebirds 10:45-11:15  
PM Penguins 12:15-12:45  
Toucans 12:45-1:15

## A Birthday Cake for Jesus

Round Cake Pan  
White Frosting  
12 Red Candles  
A Circle of Evergreens  
Chocolate Cake Mix  
1 Yellow Star  
Red Sprinkles

Make it round like the never-ending circle so is His love for all of us. Make it chocolate like the darkness our sins bring to us and others. Make it covered with white frosting like His purity covering our weaknesses. Top it with the yellow star and put an angel on, the bearer of the first glad tidings. Put 12 red candles on top like the 12 months of the year that Christ is our light, add red for the blood He willingly shed for us. Encircle this loving cake with evergreens, the symbol of everlasting life.



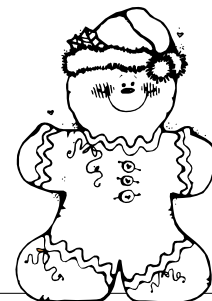
## Parent/Teacher Conferences

ELP will not be holding classes Tuesday-Thursday, January 31 - February 2 due to Parent/Teacher Conferences. A sign up sheet will be posted after the first of the New Year to schedule your conference.

Further information about conferences will follow in next month's newsletter.



PRAYERS GO UP...  
BLESSINGS COME DOWN



## Who's the Boss at Grandma's?

When you and your children go to visit grandparents or other relatives, who will do the disciplining? Whose rules apply – yours or Grandma's?

Most of the time it makes sense for the house rules to apply – rules of the house you're visiting. You can decide with your children that some behavior may be all right at Grandma's, but not all right when they get home again.

For example, grandparents may permit children to stay up later than is allowed at home. Or allow two helping of dessert.

This doesn't mean that grandparents should undercut parents' authority. Some behavior is not acceptable no matter where it takes place. For example, jumping of the bed or furniture is a no-no. Period.

As parents, you are the protectors of your children, even when it means your wishes go against grandparents' or other relatives' wishes. Sometimes you must insist on your own rules for your kids' sakes.

## Do You Believe?

Do you believe in Santa Claus? Or better yet, what do you say to a child who asks, "Daddy, my friend Billy said there isn't really a Santa Claus!" Is that true?

Whew! Sometimes kids ask us questions that we don't feel adequately prepared to answer. Like, "Where do you go when you die?" and "How do babies come into the world?" Most of us stammer and sputter and bark out a bundle of facts that we later regret having said. Our kids walk away with a puzzled look on their faces, deciding who knows what about things like death and sex. There must be a better way, right?!

The answer may lie in the following story. One day a priest was walking down the street and saw a little boy jumping up and down trying to ring a doorbell. Either the boy was too short or the doorbell was too high and he wasn't succeeding. The priest, wanting to be helpful, reached over and rang the bell for the boy, then looked down and said with a knowing smile, "What do we do next, son?" The little boy looked up and said, "Run like heck!" We often assume to know what our children are thinking or feeling and we act or talk out of this assumption and ignorance. That's when we get into trouble. The answer lies not in knowing the exact right answer but rather in first LISTENING – and reflecting back their questions. Our job then becomes easier because we will get additional information from the child when we reflect and now know if she needs reassurance, loving support for what she is thinking, a simple answer or is really asking for an in-depth response. Both parties are left feeling satisfied, supported and closer.

Back to the original questions. You reflect back, "It sounds like you are wondering if Santa Claus is real." If your child says, "Well, I think there is a Santa Claus because I saw his toy shop at the North Pole on TV then you know what your child needs is gentle reassurance for his beliefs. You don't need to torture yourself wondering if you are lying to him or ruining his future trust in you.

The next time your children surprise you with questions about Santa Claus (or life and death or sex or other BIG questions) you will know that the best answer lies not in what we say, but instead, in listening to what is behind the questions and providing support and reassurance. Besides some of us still believe in Santa!

## Preparing Your Home

For the Tree: Make a felt or paper candy cane or hang a real one on the tree

Activities: Snack on candy canes while you read a Christmas Story together.

Make hot chocolate and use small candy canes as stirring sticks while you talk about some ways God rescues us and keeps us safe.

## Preparing Your Heart

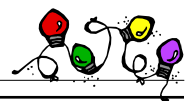
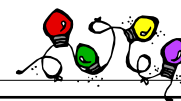
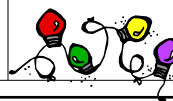
For the child: A candy maker once made a candy cane out of peppermint at Christmas time to remind us of the rod that the shepherds used to care for their sheep. The hooked end of the rod was used to rescue the sheep if they were in danger, and the straight end was used as a weapon to scare away mean animals. Remember that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

For the parent: The rod was used by the Shepherd to guide, lead, protect and prod his flock. God's written Word, the Church and most importantly, the Holy Spirit function today in the same capacity as the shepherd's rod.

## Avoiding the frenzies

Accidents are more likely to happen when parents are overly busy and tired. Use these tips for reducing holiday stress.

- Hire a baby sitter instead of shopping with your toddler.
- Shop early and consider catalog shopping.
- Don't accept every party invitation.
- Set aside one or two days to do your Christmas baking. Send your toddler to a friend's house and later, return the favor.
- For family dinners, have a potluck supper. It's fun and a major stress reducer.
- Try to maintain your toddler's usual routines, including naps and bedtimes.
- Encourage older children to help with holiday preparation and daily chores.
- Remember the simplicity of the first Christmas. When you focus on that, you won't feel guilty for down-scaling your own holiday preparation.



# Learning and Talking

It is in the course of daily living – dressing, eating, walking, playing, or riding in the car – that new concepts are learned. This is because knowledge comes naturally when the learning involves action.

Let's consider, for example, the concept "together." There are many opportunities each day to teach this concept. When washing hands, you might say, "Bring your hands **together**" as you show your child how to lather up with soap.

A few minutes later you might again introduce the concept of "together" as you demonstrate the action when dressing. "Bring the snaps **together so that they will close.**"

You can also illustrate the concept of "together" as you gather toys like nesting eggs and building blocks, saying: "Let's gather **together** all the toys that look like this one."

The outdoors – backyard, park, curbstome garden – provide occasions for parents to point out the way trees, grass, shrubs or fences look. Talk about their location, shape, size, and color.

When practical, encourage your preschooler to experiment – "Can you close your arms around this tree trunk? Is it possible to do the same thing to other trees, to larger trees?"

Such an experiment will demonstrate words that compare – one tree is "thicker" than another. Comparative words like "more," "less," "lighter," "darker," "shorter," "longer," are essential to learn so that later he can arrange objects in some kind of order.

It is good to use the hands, arms, and eyes together when making comparisons.

With experiences of this sort, your child will become competent to make the same comparisons, and be equally accurate, using only his eyes.

Little words like "under," "in," "on," and "over," convey a precise meaning which is often lost on a young child. Provoke curiosity and ask questions that require the use of prepositions. "Can you see the bus **on** the flower?"

With an incorrect answer you can casually provide the proper information. "Look hard, see the bug? It is **on** the flower. We wouldn't see it if it was **in** the flower. And we couldn't see it if it was **under** the flower."

## Gifts for Children

What shall we give the children?  
The Holidays are almost here.  
Toys and games and playthings,  
As we do most every year?

Yes, for the magic of toyland  
Is part of the Yuletide love  
To glad the hearts of childhood,  
But, I shall give something more.

I shall give them more patience,  
A more sympathetic ear,  
A little more time for laughter  
Or to tenderly dry a tear.

I shall take time to teach them  
The joy of doing some task.  
I'll try to find time to answer  
More of the questions they ask.

Time to read books together  
And to take a long walk in the sun.  
Time for a bedtime story  
After the day is done.

I shall give these to my children,  
Weaving a closer tie,  
Knitting our lives together  
With gifts that money can't buy.

## Angel Tree

The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church will have an angel tree set up at the entrance of ELP beginning Monday, November 28. The tree will have tags with a brief description of a needy child or parent with a gift idea.

If you would like to participate, please take an ornament tag from the tree and then purchase a gift. Please wrap the gift and attach the ornament tag before returning it to WCPC.

**Please have all gifts returned by noon Friday, December 9th.**




## Love Adds a Little Chocolate

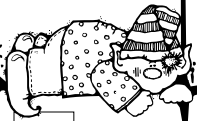
In the book *Love Adds a Little Chocolate*, Linda Andersen writes:

"Duty can pack an adequate sack lunch, but love may decide to enclose a little love note inside...  
Obligation sends the children to bed on time, but love tucks the covers in around their necks and passes out kisses and hugs (even to teenagers!)...Duty gets offended quickly if it isn't appreciated, but love learns to laugh a lot and to work for the sheer joy of doing it. Obligation can pour a glass of milk, but quite often, love adds a little chocolate."

Remember this during the holidays. Attitude in your acts of love make all the difference in the joy of the season or your everyday life.

# DECEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
		Live Nativity				
					Last day of ELP 2011	
	Holidays			Merry Christmas		
					School Begins Jan. 5	
	Holidays					

