



BETHLEHEM STAR

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

Volume 46, No. 3

March, 2006



*"Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."*

Lent is here. It is a time for reflection and the Ash Wednesday reminder is that someday we will all be dust again. But, right now we are between dust and dust and we have very little control over what happens in our lives, for God is in control.

The following story came across my e-mail this week and I want to share it with you:

Consumed by my loss, I didn't notice the hardness of the pew where I sat. I was at the funeral of my dearest friend - my mother. She finally had lost her long battle with cancer.

The hurt was so intense, I found it hard to breathe at times.

Always supportive, Mother clapped loudest at my school plays, held a box of tissues while listening to my first heartbreak, comforted me at my father's death, encouraged me in college, and prayed for me my entire life.

When Mother's illness was diagnosed, my sister had a new baby and my brother had recently married his childhood sweetheart, so it fell on me, the 27-year-old middle child without entanglements, to take care of her. I counted it an honor.

"What now, Lord?" I asked sitting in church. My life stretched out before me as an empty abyss. My brother sat stoically with his face toward the cross while clutching his wife's hand.

My sister sat slumped against her husband's shoulder, his arms around her as she cradled their child. All so deeply grieving, no one noticed I sat alone.

My place had been with our mother, preparing her meals, helping her walk, taking her to the doctor,

seeing to her medication, reading the Bible together.

Now she was with the Lord. My work was finished, and I was alone.

I heard a door open and slam shut at the back of the church.

Quick footsteps hurried along the carpeted floor. An exasperated young man looked around briefly and then sat next to me. He folded his hands and placed them on his lap. His eyes were brimming with tears. He began to snifle.

"I'm late," he explained, though no explanation was necessary. After several eulogies, he leaned over and commented, "Why do they keep calling Mary by the name of 'Margaret'?"

"Because that was her name, Margaret. Never Mary. No one called her 'Mary,'" I whispered. I wondered why this person couldn't have sat on the other side of the church. He interrupted my grieving with his tears and fidgeting.

Who was this stranger anyway?

"No, that isn't correct," he insisted, as several people glanced over at us whispering, "Her name is Mary, Mary Peters."

"That isn't who this is."

"Isn't this the Lutheran church?"

"No, the Lutheran church is across the street."

"Oh."

"I believe you're at the wrong funeral, Sir."

The solemnness of the occasion mixed with the realization of the man's mistake bubbled up inside me and came out as laughter.

I cupped my hands over my face, hoping it would be interpreted as sobs. The creaking pew gave me away. Sharp looks from other mourners only made the situation seem more hilarious.

I peeked at the bewildered, misguided man seated beside me. He was laughing, too, as he glanced around, deciding it was too late for an uneventful exit.

I imagined Mother laughing. At the final "Amen," we darted out a door and into the parking lot.

"I do believe we'll be the talk of the town," he smiled.

He said his name was Rick and since he had missed his aunt's funeral, asked me out for a cup of coffee.

That afternoon began a lifelong journey for me with this man who attended the wrong funeral, but was in the right place.

A year after our meeting, we were married at a country church where he was the assistant pastor. This time we both arrived at the same church, right on time.

In my time of sorrow, God gave me laughter.

In place of loneliness, God gave me love.

This past June we celebrated our twenty-second wedding anniversary.

Whenever anyone asks us how we met, Rick tells them, "Her mother and my Aunt Mary introduced us, and it's truly a match made in heaven."

A friend of mine gave me a plaque that I have hung in my office. It reads, "Miracles happen to those who believe in them." Reflect on that during Lent.

Love in Christ,

Pastor Tom Lange

March Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 8, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Fireside Room

Men in Mission Support for Navajo Lutheran Mission

Each year the Bethlehem Men-In-Mission try to provide some mean of support for the Lutheran Navajo Mission in Arizona. This year we are again collecting items in three areas:

1. Bath Towels – Each year in April the Mission school sends home with the students a health kit that includes bath size towels. These are also used for the students' showers at the school and for the guest apartment. We will be collecting new bath size or accept designated donations so we can purchase as many towels as possible at Costco or Sam's. Last year our congregation responded with over 70 new towels. We need to have all towels collected by April 9th, 2006, so we can arrange to have them delivered to the reservation.
2. Children's Clothing – Children's clothing in all sizes is needed.
3. Layette Items for New Mothers – The Mission gives a layette to each new mother. Infant clothing, blankets, diapers and care items are included.

There will be a box in the Narthex to collect these items. If you would prefer to make a cash contribution to help out please contact any Men-In-Mission member. Thanks for your help.

Newsletter Deadline for the April issue:

Monday, March 20, 2006.

Please submit your article by e-mail or disc to the office. The newsletter is now available on our website: www.blcla.org





Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. The name comes from the medieval custom of placing ashes on the heads of penitents on this day. Originally these penitents appear to have been persons under church discipline who wished to be reconciled to the

Church on Maundy Thursday. The ashes were a public acknowledgment of their penance. The spirit of Ash Wednesday is most solemn. The mood is penitence and reflection on the quality of our faith and life. As the ceremony of the reconciliation of penitents fell into disuse, the practice arose of marking the heads of all faithful with an ashen cross as a visible symbol of the penitential season which began on this day.

Ashes suggest judgement and God's condemnation of sin; frailty, our total dependence upon God for life, humiliation, and repentance. Ashes also suggest cleansing and renewal. They once were used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap. Ashes thus are an example of death and renewal. The opportunity will be available for those who wish to receive an ashen cross on their forehead or hand during our Ash Wednesday service.



The name of Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning spring, the time when the days lengthen. The early Christians remembered with special devotion the forty hours during which Christ lay in the tomb. The period of commemoration was later

extended to two weeks, and eventually, in recognition of the forty days of Christ's temptation to forty days. Since Sundays were never fast days, being in Lent but not of Lent, four weekdays were added to the six weeks and this finally fixed the season as forty fasting days. The medieval observance of Lent with its rigors and efforts at appeasement was a tragic relapse from the joy of the early Christians in complete redemption from the fear and uncertainty of pre-Christian thought. To fix our thought entirely on the sufferings and death of Christ during the entire season of Lent would be to the exclusion of other ideas. And by the time Holy Week is reached our minds may well be so saturated with morbidity that we would find it wearisome and unrewarding to repeat the same details. Lent should therefore prepare us for Easter, not Good Friday.

Worship Schedule during Lent and Holy Week

Wednesday, March 1st

Ash Wednesday service 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 5th First Sunday in Lent

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday, March 8th

Worship service with Lenten drama

Sunday, March 12th Second Sunday in Lent

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday, March 15th

Worship service with Lenten drama

Sunday, March 19th Third Sunday in Lent

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday, March 22nd

Worship service with Lenten drama

Sunday, March 26th Fourth Sunday in Lent

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday, March 29th

Worship service with Lenten drama

Sunday, April 2nd Fifth Sunday in Lent

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday, April 5th

Worship service with Lenten drama

Sunday, April 9th Palm Sunday

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Thursday, April 13th Maundy Thursday

Family service

Friday, April 14th Good Friday

Worship service

Saturday, April 15th Holy Saturday

Prayer Vigil

Sunday, April 16th Easter Sunday

Worship services with Holy Communion
8:30 am & 11:00 am

Ask the Pastor:

“Pastor Lange, where do we get the palms that are given out at the Palm Sunday service?”

“Well, it seems that we’ve purchased the same palms forever but it’s probably about 13 or 14 years. The answer is quite simple - I received a solicitation in the mail from the African Palms program and talked with them about the work that they were doing and it seemed a simple way to help other people. And that’s part of the lesson that we are striving to remember each day as Christians. The Gospel keeps us mindful that we all are to help others in whatever way we can.

The use of the palms may seem a small contribution, but as you can see from the information below when many of us remember to serve God in whatever way we can His work is done.

Enjoy the palms, remember the story and enjoy this time as we look forward to the glory of Easter and the commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord.”

Pastor Tom



From the African Palms website: <http://www.stjohnsolney.org/palms/> :

The African Palms program was founded in 1965 by Father Alan Talbot, an Anglican priest who served for six years as a missionary in the Diocese of Masasi in Tanzania, not far from the Mozambique border. Father Talbot observed the poverty of the people and sought ways for them to augment their income above that achieved from subsistence farming. He encouraged the villagers to begin making palm crosses for use in churches on Palm Sunday. At first he distributed crosses to friends and churches in London. From this small beginning the project spread until it included all of the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, and Germany. This year over 6 million crosses will be shipped worldwide, 1.8 million in the U.S. alone.

The Women of St. John's Church initiated the project in the U.S. in 1976. It has become a total parish project that involves youth groups, women and men with a significant number of retired persons. This project depends almost entirely on volunteer help.

The crosses are produced in seven villages near Masasi, Tanzania. Entire families take part in the project. Each year several large shipping containers of palm crosses arrive at the Port of Baltimore, Maryland, destined for St. John's Church, Olney. From St. John's, palm cross orders ranging from 50 to 10,000 are shipped nationwide to churches, church related groups, chaplaincies, and individuals.

African Palms USA operates as a nonprofit overseas mission project. The net proceeds from the sale of crosses, and all donations received, are returned to Africa in the form of non-denominational self-help grants to meet very basic human needs, such as: disaster and refugee relief, medical and public health programs and agricultural programs. Since 1976, **African Palms USA** has provided over \$1,476,708 in self help grants.

African Palms crosses are made from dried branches of the dwarf palm *Hyphaena coriacea*. Each cross is approximately 4.5" x 6". Beyond use on Palm Sunday (Mark 11: 1-10) the crosses can be used for pastoral visits, Sunday school, vacation bible school, Mother's Day etc., and as a reminder of your part in helping people in Africa help themselves.

Life Together Small Groups are underway!

What on Earth am I Here For? continues on...After completing the first seven chapters of Rick Warren's Book "The Purpose-Driven Life" , which is the meat of his book, we decided to go forth and study the First Purpose in life - chapters 8-14. Our group began with the organizational meeting on February 7th, 7:00 p.m. at the Mazzari's home. Marti Mazzari is the Leader, Ernie Mazzari is the Apprentice. For those "new" to the group, there will be a recap of the first 7 chapters, to bring them up to speed. We will meet for 8 sessions beginning February 14th. Our hostess will be Marynell Wolfe. Some of the chapters are: What Makes God Smile? When God Seems Distant. The Heart of Worship etc. Several have signed up, but we have room for more and we aim to fill the "empty chair".

Prayer for Healing -This small group will be learning about the biblical basis for prayer. It is designed as a way to automate each member getting prayer for healing on a regular basis and getting practice praying for others. The group will discuss the book "You and Your Friends Can Be Healed" by Pastor Mark Dahle and will learn to use the model for prayer presented in the book to pray for one another. We will be meeting at 7:00 pm on Friday evenings from February 3rd to April 7th and new participants are welcome at any time. In addition, there will be a workshop at Bethlehem from 10-12 noon on Saturday, February 25th led by Pastor Mark Dahle to teach the principles of prayer for healing from his book to anyone from the congregation or the community who wishes to attend. If you would like to join the group or if you have a specific prayer request you would like to have included in the prayer time, please contact Everett Zupke.

We Care Fund Raiser - In collaboration with We Care staff and board members this small group's focus will be to collect and develop ideas for fund raising that can be used by We Care throughout the year. We Care is in need of strategies that will help provide a consistent money flow to allow them to do their wonderful ministry in our community. Meetings dates to be announced. For more information please contact Alice Roop.

Close Knit - The Close Knit small group is working together to knit baby blankets for Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. Sadly, the blankets will be used to wrap deceased infants when they are presented to the parents for their final goodbyes. They are meant to represent warmth, love and caring. Each member of the group plans to attach a personal "token" to their hand made blanket so that the parents will know the caring of each knitter that is sent with the blanket. For instance, some members will use guardian angel pins, while others will use personal notes or appliques of some sort. The group has met every week for 5 weeks at the time of this printing. They are planning to regroup and continue meeting after a short hiatus. Anyone interested in this group, please notify Johanne Hansen.

Stations of the Cross - as Christians we believe that the victory of the cross and resurrection is greater than the pain of this life, the sins we have committed and the sins that have been inflicted on us by others. This study will take us on the journey from Jesus' condemnation to when he's laid in the tomb. We will experience the 14 stations of the cross on this journey. The organizational meeting is being held Monday, February 20th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Regular meeting dates and times will be determined at the organizational meeting. Anyone interested in this group, please notify Charlotte Driskill.

Choir News

Please welcome the newest addition to our Bethlehem family, our new Director of Music, Mrs. Carole Parmeter Dyer.

While we were saddened to see Linda Nason and her husband, Bill, leave us for new challenges, providence shined on us again with Carole and her husband, Tom. The Dyer family includes two and a half year old Aidan, who keeps Carole quite busy when she's not with us. Carole's experience and education, along with her enthusiasm for music seems a natural fit for our church. Please take a moment to greet the Dyers!

The Shower Singer is back!

The six-week choir option has returned for the Lenten season. If you can sing, or think that you can, and you'd like to help the choir praise God through music, then come join the fun for just six weeks! You won't be asked for a longer commitment than that, but, you just might catch the bug and find that you really *are* a choir singer and stay for more. Choir rehearsals are held on Thursdays from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Shower caps may be available if necessary.



Men-In-Mission

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Heifer Project

Help buy a Heifer for the Heifer Project! - pick up a plastic ark to save your spare change or designate the Heifer Project on an offering or pew envelope.



"A good dairy cow can produce four gallons of milk per day, enough for a family to drink and share with neighbors, and still have enough left over to sell. The protein in milk can transform sick, malnourished children into healthy boys and girls. The sale of surplus milk earns money for school fees, medicine, clothing and home improvements. And because a healthy cow can have a calf every year, your gift of a heifer could eventually help an entire community move from poverty to self-reliance."

The current goal is to collect \$500 for a Heifer by Easter. As of February 22nd we've collected \$116.49 toward that goal. The plastic arks and Heifer Project pamphlets are in the narthex. Please leave your filled arks on the counter in the church office. More information about the great work that Heifer International does can be found at www.heifer.org.

How to Pray for Healing

Workshop/Retreat/Small Group

A workshop was held Saturday, February 25th, in the sanctuary at Bethlehem Lutheran Church from 10:00 am to noon with the attendees being richly blessed. Additional time was spent by some attendees following the workshop with Pastor Mark to answer questions and receive additional prayer and get additional teaching and practice on prayer for healing. Attendees included members of Bethlehem and of area Lutheran and other denomination churches. It was led by Pastor Mark Dahle, author of a book *You and Your Friends Can Be Healed*.

Pastor Mark has presented his workshops at the Pacifica Synod assemblies the past two years and has conducted three four-day retreats at Luther Village in Oak Glen with another scheduled for April 2-5 this spring. The retreat begins at 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 2 and goes through noon on Wednesday, April 5. The cost is \$170 for a double occupancy room and all meals (go to <http://HealingSeminar.com> for more information).

His book and workshops are a practical guide and offer simple instruction on prayer for healing and practical experience in praying for others. We are using Pastor Mark's book and his model for prayer as a basis for our Prayer for Healing small group meeting on Friday nights at 7:00 p.m. from February 3 through April 7th. You can join the small group for continued study and experience in praying for others and having others pray for you.

W.E.L.C.A. News
March, 2006

Women's Bible Study

Session 7

Ruth 1:8-14 16-18

“ACT BOLDLY with Faithfulness

Come to a circle meeting and learn about God's faithfulness to Ruth & Naomi

Faith Circle will meet on Tues., Mar. 7, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room For information call Circle Leader Jean Franz.

Hostess: Camille Riach

Bible Study Leader: Marti Mazzari

Phoebe Circle will meet on Tues., Mar. 14, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Dianna Reynolds. Dianna will also lead the Bible Study. For more information call Charlotte Driskill.

W.E.L.C.A. Board will meet on Mon. Mar. 6, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. in Bachman Hall.

Both circles will be working, starting this month, toward their goal of putting together 40 school kits, by September, for the Lutheran World Relief Project. Monthly donations of canned goods to We Care will also continue.

For information call President, Christina Watson.



Sunday Morning

Coffee & Cookies

Thank you to Faith Circle for providing coffee and cookies in February...Men in Mission will be responsible for coffee and cookies in March

Upcoming Events:

*Sat. Mar., 4th Mission Areas Awareness Day, San Diego. Call Marianne for details.

*Sat. Mar., 18th Spring Brunch-General Meeting at Bethlehem-Hostess: W.E.L.C.A. Board 9- 11:00 a.m.

*Wed. April 5th W.E.L.C.A. sponsors Lenten Soup and Salad Supper.

*Sat. April 29th Cluster Event "Travel Boldly" at Mission Church in Laguna Niguel 8:45-11:00 a.m. Call Marianne.



Please plan on the attending the W.E.L.C.A. Spring Brunch. Theme: "Act Boldly with Compassion" Guest Speaker-Mandy Garcia from *Sheepfold-a shelter, refuge and a new beginning for abused women and their children.* Love Gifts will be collected. Some suggestions are Size 4 diapers, children clothes 8 mo. to 10-12 new or gently used. Sign up in the Narthex.

Attention: All Women
Saturday May 6th Phoebe Circle will hostess a luncheon featuring "His Grace" a liturgical dance company. Look for more details next month

Mark your calendars!

Saturday June 10th the Men in Mission will provide a pancake breakfast while WELCA offers a great Junktique-start saving your treasures now. Thrivent matching funds will be requested for benevolence.

♣♣♣Happy St. Patrick's Day♣♣♣

In whom do you see evidence of faithfulness?

ACT BOLDLY WITH FAITHFULNESS



Birthdays

3/ 4	Marjorie Clemens Lon Warnock
3/ 6	Bruce Walter
3/ 9	Joyce Ritz
3/10	Karin Bonwit Sandy Retrum
3/11	Ron Clausen Philip Knox
3/12	Dick Spies
3/14	Sarah Benning Savanna Roper
3/15	Mary Coxson
3/17	Shary Reed Ann Tegtmeier
3/18	Kevin Gustafson Ruth Precker
3/20	Peter Warnock
3/21	Lynn Starman
3/22	Charlie Lyons Jason Sakowski
3/23	Michael Wiswell
3/25	Hartley Koch
3/26	Michelle Schneider Claire Thronson
3/27	Robert Wooldridge
3/28	Julie Kizziar
3/29	Elisabeth DeWeese Bill Haglund Linda Kirkpatrick Shelba Ochampaugh
3/30	Tanner Riach
3/31	Briana Rovida

Anniversaries

3/1/1997	Steve & Jamie Slade
3/9/1957	Vern & Margie Reynolds
3/9/1985	John & Hollie Mann
3/15/1997	John & Susan Buezis
3/21/1992	Bob & Shelly Roper
3/24/1979	Tom & Peggy Lange
3/26/2005	Jeff & Leslie Moeller

*Please remember in prayer these members
and friends of our congregation:*

Hospitalized:

Scott Mizener (Luelle Buezis' nephew)
Robert Roehm (Nita Woolston's son)

Recuperating:

Florence Anderson (Gary Nehrenberg's mother)
Jaysen Armas (9 mo. old)
Amy Bachman
Gwen Bailon (friend of Cathy Warnock) - surgery
Sigrun Borneo
Joel Cooper - heart surgery
Joshua Gimbel (Betty Jacobs' great-grandson)
Melanie Henniges (Everett Zupke's niece)
Katherine Lindell
Charlie Lyons
Cyrena Raichel
Mary Seibert
Everett Zupke
Lucille Zupke (Everett Zupke's mother)

Undergoing treatment:

Anna Backlund (friend of Sara DeWeese)
Adeline Beemer (Lynn Roesner's mother) lymphoma
Sophie Buttler
Carmen Chavez (friend of the Straffords) - lupus
Kyle Cooke (friend of the Driskills) - lung cancer
Ruth Dalton (friend of Alice Roop) - cancer
Sara DeWeese - cancer
Mike Edson (cousin of Charlotte Driskill) - stroke
Katrina Gary
Wilma Gary
Rev Kay M. Glaesner (friend of Bob & Nina Van Tress)
Jack Lyons
Harold Miller
John Moeller (Marjorie Moeller's brother) - lymphoma
Shirley Moleneux (Betty Jacobs' niece) - cancer
Sue Moran (friend of the Retrums) - cancer
Joyce Rekstad - lupus
Evie Romano (Joanne Wolfe's mother) - emphysema
Lisa Rough (niece of Bob & Nina Van Tress)
Katherine Shephard (friend of Betty Frovarp)
Gary Schulze (friend of Betty Frovarp)
Tracy Serve (friend of Peggy Lange) - brain tumor

Convalescent or Care Facility: Sue Bradish, Ruth Hudson, Ernie Kling, Hartley Koch, Arlene Larson, Jeanette Olmstead, Ruth Precker, Glenn Snyder, Darlene Staglin, Jeff Thompson.

Homebound: Gladyce Ackerman, John Buttler, George Maxwell.

Thanks to These People for Serving in March, 2006

DATE	TIME	ACOLYTE	CROSS BEARER	READER	USHERS	COUNTERS	OPEN/CLOSE
3/5	8:30			Nick Medrano		Cathy Warnock	Myke Strafford
	11:00			Everett Zupke		Everett Zupke	Marianne Sakowski
3/12	8:30					Cheri Dobberteen	Marianne Sakowski
	11:00			John Buezis, Jr.		Bruce Gustafson	Lon Warnock
3/19	8:30					Christina Watson	Alan Coxson
	11:00					Dick Hansen	Everett Zupke
3/26	8:30			Margaret Hangartner		John Buezis, Jr	Jeff Moeller
	11:00					Lowell Johnson	



ALTAR GUILD

3/5 Marge Hargrove
 3/12 Andrea Campbell
 3/19 Doris Schaefer
 3/26 Debby Gustafson

ALTAR FLOWERS

3/5 Warnock
 3/12
 3/19 Warnock
 3/26



Altar Flowers

NURSERY CARE

Nursery care is provided during our Sunday services. An attendant will be in our nursery from 8:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. to care for infants and preschool children.