



BETHLEHEM STAR

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

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Ephesians 5:1-14

“What a Difference
Perception Makes”

In my grandfather's backyard was a large oak tree. We often would sit in the backyard and watch the squirrels run up that tree, fill their mouths with the nuts, run back down, rapidly dig holes in the ground, and bury their harvest for their winter nourishment. On one particular day, when I was around 6 years old, I remember so well as my grandfather bent over, picked up one of the nuts, showed it to me, and asked, “What do you see?” Wondering why he asked me such an easy question I quickly responded, “Pop, it's an acorn or nut.” To this my grandfather replied, “Well, to me I see a new tree.”

What a difference one's perception makes! As we live our daily lives and make our daily decisions about the fruits of our lives, we must choose our perception. Will we choose to live the fruits of a life in Christ or will we choose the fruits of darkness? It is no big secret that the ways of darkness often seem more appealing and perhaps give more instant gratification. Certainly, at times, it seems that those choosing the ways of darkness find quick rewards. Paul, however, in his letter to the Ephesians encourages us not to let Satan deceive us. As we come to know Jesus we are free to see beyond the shallowness of the immediate gratification gained from the ways of darkness and to see the true greatness of the ways of Light. We are free to know that though

the fruits of darkness may offer temporary rewards, the ways of light in Christ give us eternal ones. So Paul can exclaim, “Sleepers awake! Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.” Like my grandfather's comments about the acorn, in Christ we are free to look at the fruits of Light and say, “I see new life!”

Our perception is also important when it comes to the life and future of our congregation. During this time of transition it is important that we form a perception of where we want and what we want our congregation's life and future to be about. The perception we form will determine what the future life and ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran will look like. Over the next few months you will be asked to help us build a solid perception of where and what we want our congregation to be about. For us to build the best perception for the future of Bethlehem we need you to take part in the surveys and forums where we will gather the information we need to set us on our future path. Once we have this perception, or some may say vision, it will help determine what type of pastor-leader is needed to help bring our perception to a reality. So, for us to have the best perception of the future of Bethlehem, we need your input. I encourage each of you to take the time to be part of this process. The more people who take part in this process the better the future life and ministry of Bethlehem will be.

In Christ,
Pastor Will

Life Together

Life Together will conduct two Small Group workshops for the purpose of constructing Christmas Christian decorations. The decorations will be used to hang on the Christmas tree in our church. These will replace the Christmas decorations used previously, which have disintegrated. These workshops will be conducted on Saturday, October 7, 2006 from 10 AM to 2 PM and also on Sunday, November 12, 2006 from 2-4 PM. You are welcome to come on a drop in basis or spend the entire time at one or both sessions. Instructions and material will be supplied. No previous arts and crafts knowledge or expertise required. Please come and join the fun. Our goal is to have them completed by December 1st. Any questions, call Johanne Hansen.

Women of Bethlehem...



We are collecting sweaters and sweatshirts for Lutheran World Relief. We need sweaters and sweatshirts for women, men, children and infants.

The items must be in good condition as they are an indication of our respect for the recipients. Please bring your donations to the box in the narthex before October 17th. No other items of clothing are needed, we thank you for your help.

Confirmation News

This year our confirmation program has two parts. Our Sunday morning sessions have already begun. Sunday sessions will be centered on Bible study. Our midweek sessions will focus on different parts of the Small Catechism. These sessions will begin the first week of October. This year we will be using the new **Here We Stand** confirmation program from Augsburg Fortress. Parents of confirmation students are asked to meet for a brief (10 minute) meeting after the first worship service on October 1st. We will determine the day of our midweek sessions at this meeting.

Parent and Grandparent Corner

How can I help make baptism an important part of my child or grandchild's life?

Baptism is a central part of our life in Christ. Baptisms can be as memorable and meaningful as you nurture them to be. Here are some suggestions to help your child's baptism remain special to them.

Mark your family calendar with the baptismal dates of each family member.

Surround your child's baptismal date with special rituals and traditions. Plan a special meal or treat for your family or with some friends from Church School. Share pictures of their baptism day and light their baptismal candle.

Make a connection between birthdays and baptisms. Talk first about birthdays as the day they were named and became a part of your family. Then identify baptism as the day they became a part of God's family.

Tape an interview with your child each year. Have them identify their favorite Bible character or story, new things they've learned about God or any questions they might have about God.

Take annual pictures of your children in front of the baptismal font in your church. Point out the many ways they have grown as a "child of God."

Invite baptismal sponsors to send a special note or word of encouragement as the child continues to grow.

Place a bowl on your table and invite family members to think of their own baptisms and what it means to be a member of God's family as they dip their fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Make the sign of the cross on your children's foreheads as a daily reminder that God loves them and considers them special members of God's family.

(Ideas taken from the E.L.C.A. Web Page)

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are 852 million people who are hungry and undernourished on any given day.

In third world countries 1 in 6 people are hungry and 1 in 4 people lack safe drinking water.

Every time you give to the E.L.C.A. world Hunger Fund or the Heifer Project you help to provide needed nourishment to those in need of daily nourishment.

- The Pacifica Synod is made up of 123 congregation, has over 56,000 baptized members and over 41,000 confirmed members.

Ring in the Holidays!

Let's get together and ring bells! If we can get enough people, then you would only need to worry about ringing two bells or one bell if you only have one good hand. The ability to read music is helpful but is not a requirement. It really is easier than it looks! Meet us in the upper room above the sound room, Wednesday, October 4, at 6:30 p.m. To learn more about bell ringing, contact Richard Toth or Heidi Kracy.

Three Trees!

Many thanks to those who have been turning in their arks stuffed with coins and bills! Since we purchased our Milk Menagerie, we have been able to purchase three trees (\$60 each) for the Heifer Project. Hopefully, you picked up an empty ark from the Narthex. Filled arks can be left on the counter in the church office at any time. If you are curious to know how much money your ark held, put a note inside with contact information, and we'll let you know your grand total. Keep those coins coming!

October Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

7:00 pm in the Fireside Room

Finance Committee News

The Church Council has approved a recommendation by the Finance Committee to seek the approval of the congregation to refinance the building debt and borrow additional funds for immediate needs of the church buildings, grounds, and parsonage. The Congregation currently has two Mortgage loans that together are about \$220,000. The Council would like to combine the two notes into one, change the term to twenty years and increase the debt to \$300,000. This action would substantially reduce the monthly payment on the debt and provide additional funds for the immediate needs of the church buildings, grounds, and parsonage as recommended by the property committee.



Newsletter Deadline

Monday, October 16, 2006
(third Monday of the month)

Please submit your article or news items by email or disc.

Men In Mission Kick-Off Breakfast

The Bethlehem Men in Mission will have a Kick-Off Breakfast on Saturday, October 7th, in Bachman Hall. All men at Bethlehem and any friends are welcome. The highlight of the morning will be a presentation by Pastor Mark Will on "The Lutheran Ministry in Alaska". Any questions please contact Dale Retrum at (714) 527-4337 or (562) 982-5732.



**Meet
for
Breakfast**

HALLOWEEN PARTY

The Youth Group will be hosting a Halloween Party on Sunday, October 29, 2006 in Bachman Hall at 5:00 p.m. There will be refreshments available.

Some activities, to name a few, are the judging of Halloween Costumes and a Pumpkin decorating contest. So please wear your Halloween Costume, and bring your own pumpkin if you're interested in decorating a pumpkin, or bring your own pre-decorated pumpkin. We will be selling tickets out on the patio between



services and at the door. The prices will be \$2 per person or \$5 per family. Hope to see you all there! And Happy Halloween!

Ready for the New Year?

It's Fall, and the kids have just begun their school year. Halloween is around the corner, and before you know it, Thanksgiving is here and then Christmas! Before you get caught in the mad rush to the end of 2006, take a few moments to consider scheduling yourself a day in the decorating barn for the Rose Parade floats.

Petal Pushers needs help decorating their float and five others. The income they receive from decorating these floats helps to offset the cost of

the Lutheran Hour Float.

We need adults and youth to participate. A youth group needs one adult per 5 youths. Because of insurance reasons, the minimum age is 13. All volunteers must wear a Petal Pushers® sweatshirt or T-shirt from ANY year. The shirts not only provide a fine Christian witness to others, but also enable Petal Pushers® access to the buildings. This year the shirts are gray with the Petal Pushers® logo on the front and have a rendering of the float on the back.

Last year, they did not have enough volunteers for the beginning stages of decorating. There are two stages of decoration, "Detail Days" and "Decorating Days." Petal Pusher shirts are optional on Detail Days which are scheduled on Saturday, December 2, 9, 16 and 23 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Petal Pusher Shirts are required on Decorating Days which are scheduled with two shifts each day – December 26 through December 31.

Two sign-up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex—one for shirt orders and the other for volunteer work days. You do not have to buy a new shirt if you have one from another year. We also have a few sweatshirts that can be borrowed for the day. Contact Geoff or Heidi Kracy for more information. You can also get more information on the web. Visit www.petalpushers.org to learn more about the organization. Visit www.phxdeco.com to learn about the floats built by Phoenix Decorating and to view pictures from the live cameras in the Rose Palace decorating barn.



Transition Team Report #1

The purpose of this report is to explain the transition process and provide an update to the Bethlehem congregation regarding the activities of the Transition Team during the process of calling a new pastor.

With the announcement during the latter part of the year 2005 by Pastor Tom that he would be resigning effective the end of June 2006, the Bethlehem Council contacted the Pacifica Synod for information regarding the appropriate steps to follow. Pacifica Synod Bishop Murray Finck met with the Bethlehem Congregational Council at the November 2005 Council Meeting and presented an overview of the recommended process for calling a new pastor. It was the recommendation of the Synod that approximately two or three months prior to Pastor Tom leaving that the Council should appoint a Transition Team of no more than twelve members representing a varied cross-section of the congregation. Pastor Gordon Peterson of the Pacifica Synod office is assigned to coordinate with congregations to assist them with the call process.

The following are currently members of the Transition Team: Eric Dobberteen, John Gearhart, Debby Gustafson, Dale Retrum, Dianna Reynolds, Erik and Melissa Sandvig, and Randy and Karen Upright. Bruce Gustafson, Marianne Sakowski, Congregational President and Vice-President respectively, and Interim Pastor Mark Will serve on the Transition Team as ex-officio members. The Call Process as outlined by the Synod appears to be a well thought out and it is expected that if done properly it could take the better part of a year or more.

With the first item of business to identify and hire an Interim pastor completed, the Transition Team is now involved with its main order of business, which is to develop the responses for a Congregational Profile of Bethlehem. This Profile is a rather lengthy document that is intended to communicate to Synod as well any potential pastoral candidates information about Bethlehem, such as its history, what Bethlehem is like today and the type of pastor it is hoping to find. The Transition Team has just completed gathering

data for the History portion of the profile and is now assembling that data into a response for the History portion of the Profile. Bethlehem members were asked to provide a written response for the history and/or participate in one of several Focus Group meetings in August. The Transition Team appreciates the significant number of responses received and thanks all who participated. Once the response for the History portion has been finalized the Transition Team plans to post a copy in the Narthex as well as mail out one to each member.

There will be at least three more opportunities for the members at Bethlehem to help develop the responses for the remainder of the Profile. Next will be a written survey as well as a Focus Group meeting to develop a description of what Bethlehem is like today, then another survey and Focus Group meeting to develop a description of what type of pastor Bethlehem hopes to find, and finally a congregational meeting to discuss the entire Congregational Profile. As each of these opportunities occur please do your best to provide an input so the final response for the Profile can be as inclusive and accurate as possible.

It is important for the congregation to understand that the Transition Team is **not** the Call Committee. Several important tasks must be accomplished before a Call Committee is appointed. It is only after the Transition Team completes the Congregational Profile that a Call Committee will be appointed. That most likely will occur sometime during the Fall or Spring time period. The Call Committee will take a second look at the profile, submit it to the Synod, meet with Synod staff, interview the candidates presented for the congregation's consideration, and make their recommendation to the Council and Congregation.

It is the desire of the Transition Team to keep the congregation informed of the Team's activities and decisions made. If you have any questions about the Transition Process please contact any member of the Team.

BETHLEHEM TRANSITION TEAM

W.E.L.C.A. News

October 2006

Women's Bible Study

Hope in God in Times of Suffering

"A God of Relationship"

Theme Verse: Genesis 1:26



Faith Circle will meet on Tues., Oct. 03, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Sophie Happel will act as Hostess and Alice Roop will lead the Bible Study. Please bring your We Care donations. Call Circle Leader Jean Franz for more information.

Phoebe Circle will meet on **Wed.**, Oct. 11, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Margie Reynolds. ? will lead the Bible Study. For more information call Charlotte Driskill.

W.E.L.C.A. Board will meet on Mon. Oct 2nd, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. in Bachman Hall.

Thank you to Faith & Phoebe Circle! They have finished 40 school kits for the Lutheran World Relief Project. 5 boxes of sweaters have been collected and will be shipped along with the school kits in Mid October. Donations of canned goods to We Care will continue. For information call President, Christina Watson.



Sunday Morning

Coffee & Cookies

Thank you to Men in Mission for providing coffee and cookies in September. Phoebe will be responsible in October.

Upcoming Events:

Sat. Oct. 7th Cluster Event "Live Boldly" 9 a.m. Brunch at Our Redeemer, Garden Grove. Contact Marianne for more details.

Thurs. Oct. 19th. Bakery/Gourmet Workshop at Bethlehem's kitchen from 6p.m. to 9p.m. Call Cheri Dobbertein if you can participate.

Sat. Oct. 21st 33rd Annual Apple Festival Bazaar. 8a.m. to 2p.m. Lunch will be served.

Women ^{of the} ELCA

Please bring your good, clean Junktique items beginning Sun. Oct. 15th and deposit them at the designated areas. Help is needed to price the donations! Contact Arlene Pollard or Christina. Please have all your donations in by Friday Oct 20th a.m. Thanks!



Thank you to Faith Circle for providing the delicious Salad Supper on Wed. Sept. 20th "Boldly We Light Our Way Into International Outreach" was the theme and Chaplain Virginia Sharma, from the Lutheran Maritime Mission, was our guest speaker. It was a fun and inspirational evening. The Love Gifts were really appreciated!



Andrea Campbell, Marianne Sakowski and Christina Watson will be attending the 2006 Pacifica Synod Gathering in Hawaii November 2-5. We will be donating a silent auction basket and would appreciate any gift card or monetary donations.



Theme Verse Hebrews 13:1