



Bethlehem Star

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

Volume 47, Issue 1

January, 2007

*From the
Pastor*



“The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness- on them light has shined.”

Isaiah 9:2

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” John 1:4-5

As we begin another new year, we do so hearing the message of our Epiphany season. A star shining in the night skies proclaiming that God had sent the true light into the world. A light that John in his Gospel reminds us shines even in the deepest darkness. A light that shines on us and hopefully through us as well.

Long ago God chose a people for Himself that they might carry out His purpose. He called this nation to be different from the rest. They were to follow Him and worship Him. He would tell them what to do and in fact show them through various acts of worship what He required of them. In order to have such a nation He called Abraham long ago and promised him that he would make of him a great nation and that by him all families of the earth would be blessed.

As we know, Abraham obeyed God, and his descendants became the church of the Old Testament. The nation was called Israel after Abraham's grandson. But, the Israelites did not remain true to the purpose for which God had selected them. They were not the blessing that they, as a nation and church, were supposed to be. Their own desires led them in other directions so that when the “fullness of time” arrived and God sent His Son into the world, they rejected Him. A remnant, however, did

remain true. To these the Apostle Peter wrote, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1Peter 2:9)

As we begin a new year it is good for us to hear these words for we are to be a people with a purpose. We are the ones God calls His chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation. We who know the true light and know that the light shines on us must also be reminded that God depends on us to let the light shine from and through us. We are the church and God calls us to the responsibility to “declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The new year will no doubt bring many challenges to us as the church. God calls us, the people of Bethlehem, to be His chosen people. God calls us to let His light shine. God calls us to proclaim His wondrous deeds to a world and to people who need the true light in their lives.

As we begin this new year let us pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us to follow the Light and fulfill the purposes God has for us His chosen people in this new year. The challenges ahead of us may be great, but together with the Spirit leading us, we can be the people God calls and needs us to be.

The peace of God be with you as we begin this new year!

Pastor Will

Merry Christmas from David and Carla

December 17, 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from Bratislava! Two thousand years ago God surprised our world with the gift of his presence in the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Matthew 1:22-23 tells us this about the birth:

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

We hope that you are all living in the reality and the joy of the meaning of Christ's birth – God with us!

The sights, sounds, and activities of Christmas are all around us here in Bratislava. The Christmas market is in full swing down at the central town square, and the town is decorated very beautifully. At our Lyceum school this coming Wednesday all the missionary teachers from America will be invited to help prepare Kapustnica, the traditional soup always prepared for Christmas here in Slovakia. Then on Thursday a Kapustnica party will take place. (Kapustnica means 'sauerkraut soup.')

The approach of Christmas has also been very evident at our church. We have had a number of wonderful special activities this year. A holiday carol sing was held last Sunday, and this Sunday the children of our church presented their Christmas program. Tomorrow evening, we will offer a special choir concert in the British Tradition called "The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols." Money raised at that concert will be used to support our growing refugee ministry. Christmas Eve services are, of course, only a week away. Something special will be happening during the morning service on Christmas Eve, when one of our Jr. High youth will be baptized. This is the first of a number of baptisms that will happen in the next month. David has been working with an international group of youth, some of whom will be baptized, and all of whom will be having their Confirmation in January.

We have now been in Slovakia a little over two years. The time has gone by so quickly. We appreciate your ongoing support and prayers during that time. A big part of our role here is to help people who are far from home feel as if they still have a family nearby. This is, of course, especially important during the holidays. Thanks for helping us also to feel less isolated from home through your greetings, cards, gifts, calls, and letters of support. Pray for us and for the many others here in Slovakia who will spend Christmas far from home. Please remember especially one of our African refugees (whose name is Christian), who just lost his 14-year-old brother to cancer. Pray also that we may be effective at the schools in which we work. Pray that our congregation will continue to grow and do a good job of reaching out to people in this city. And finally, please pray for the Slovak nation, that it may continue to meet the ongoing challenges it is facing as a post-communist country.

Your love and prayers really are making a difference for us and for this place.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and God's blessings in the New Year.

David and Carla



The 2007 Senior Choir resumes rehearsal on Thursday, January 4th at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. If you have an interest in joining in the fellowship and fun of the choir please come to rehearsal and talk with Carole, she'll be glad to help you find the perfect spot in the choir!

Heifer Project News

Thank you to everyone who diligently saved their change and turned in their Heifer ark. As of this writing, we have purchased ten trees and, most likely, will have enough to purchase an eleventh tree by the end of the year. We will continue to collect for Heifer Project in 2007, and you will find a new-styled, cardboard ark for your spare change in the Narthex. In 2006, we purchased, one llama, one heifer, a milk menagerie and the above mentioned trees. What do think we should purchase next? See the article, "Help Us Set Our Next Goal!"

Help Us Set Our Next Goal!

Our support for the Heifer Project continues this year, but we are getting a bit tired of collecting for trees. It's time to set a new goal for Easter, April 8, 2007. Should we purchase chicks, rabbits, bees, goats, heifers, or combinations of animals? Visit Bethlehem's web site at www.blcla.org and you will find on the "Ministries" page a rooster in the Heifer Project section. Click on the rooster to bring up the survey page. Click on your choice and click on submit and you are done! Whichever animal gets the most votes will be our goal for purchasing by Easter. If it is one of the lower priced animals, then we will purchase as many as we can with the donations provided.

"Scramble" Golf Tournament in March

We will have a Bethlehem Golf Tournament on Saturday, March 10th, 2007, at the Anaheim Hills Golf Course in Anaheim. The tournament format will be a four-person team "scramble" where the best ball will be played by each team. The Peoria Handicap System will be used. The lowest handicap will be 0 (zero) and the largest 36. The first tee time will be at 11:00 A.M. All golfers are welcome. This format is particularly nice for the lady golfers to participate. You can organize your own team or we will help match-up team members. Cost is \$70 per person and will include green fees, golf cart and prize fund. Please note that **NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED** on this course. To secure our reservation we need to have everyone signed up and the money collected by Sunday, February 25th. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex. If you have any questions please contact Dale Retrum at (714) 527-4337 or (562) 982-5732.

Parish Life Bulletin:

Thank you to everyone who came out to help decorate the church Sanctuary for Christmas. Your time and talents were greatly appreciated. A fun time was had by all, ending with a delicious lunch.

Parish Life Committee

Men in Mission Support for the Navajo Lutheran Mission

Each year the Bethlehem Men-In-Mission try to provide some means of support for the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran 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 80 new towels. We need to have all towels collected by April 15th, 2007, 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.

Dates and Deadlines

2006 Council and Committee

Annual Reports January 15th

February, 2007 Newsletter January 22nd

Council meeting . 7:30 pm, Wed., January 10th

Annual meeting 11:00 am, February 11th



Everyone Please Help Keep Doors Closed and Lights Off

Recently there has been some minor damage and petty thefts on our property. Also, lights have been found on when they are not needed. We ask that if you see a door open that shouldn't be, close them, and turn off lights that may have been left on.

We enjoy sharing our facilities with other community groups but need just that little extra effort to keep our costs as low as possible. Calendars showing room usage are available in the church office or online at www.blcla.org

Thank you for your help,
The Property Committee

Transition Team and Congregational Survey

The Transition Team is coming closer to completing their work but still needs your completed survey to help better identify who we are and what type of congregation we want to be. If you haven't completed the most recent survey please pick one up in the narthex or download a copy from our website: www.blcla.org Completed surveys can be brought or mailed to the church office.

The third and last survey will be available in February and it will be used to help determine what areas of concentration we would like in our next pastor.

These surveys are very important to the Transition Team so, please, everyone is asked to take a few minutes to carefully contribute their thoughts and opinions in this process. Thank you.

January Birthdays

1st Andrew Crawford
 Jean Rich
 Linda Scott

3rd Erik Sandvig

5th David Sandvig

6th James Dawson

7th Kay Shelton

9th Geraldine Dawson
 Kyle Hastings
 Juli Medrano

10th Phillip Howard
 Hal Wolfe

11th Michelle Freeman
 Randy Upright

12th Granger Riach

13th Nina Van Tress

14th Jarunee Chasin

15th Nellie Malana
 Annette Rygh

16th Kathleen Menchaca
 Travis Retrum

17th Susan Driskill
 Hunter Riach
 Christine Wolfe
 Scott Wooldridge

18th Wilkie Adams

20th Melinda Bustamante

22nd Darlene Urewicz

24th Al Thunselle

25th Jay Campbell
 Lisa Crawford
 Annie Dobberteen

28th Betty Nehrenberg

30th Marjorie Moeller

31st Debby Gustafson

January Anniversaries

1/30/1954 Bruce & Irene Johnson



Hospitalized:

Madeleine Laurence
 Jennifer Rienholz (granddaughter of the Sheltons)
 - brain tumor

Recuperating:

Jaysen Armas
 Gwen Bailon (friend of Cathy Warnock) - surgery
 Sigrun Borneo
 Wendy Billington (Charlotte Driskill's granddaughter) - auto accident
 Joel Cooper - heart surgery
 Joshua Gimbel (Betty Jacobs' great-grandson) - brain surgery
 Melanie Henniges (Everett Zupke's niece) stem cell surgery
 Katherine Lindell
 Charlie Lyons
 Aline Snook
 Nina Van Tress

Undergoing treatment:

Adeline Beemer (Lynn Roesner's other) - lymphoma
 Rev. Bruce Craft - experimental eye treatment
 Sara DeWeese - cancer
 Katrina Gary
 Stuart Gordon (brother-in-law of Sigrun Borneo)
 Jack Lyons
 James Lyons - lymphoma
 Jim Mauritzen (friend of the Hunts) - cancer
 Rev. Don McMillan
 Harold Miller
 Shirley Moleneux (Betty Jacobs' niece) - cancer
 Joyce Rekstad - lupus
 Gary Schulze (friend of Betty Frovarp)

Convalescent or Care Facility:

Florence Anderson Ruth Hudson
 Ernie Kling Hartley Koch
 Arlene Larson Jeanette Olmstead
 Ruth Precker Darlene Staglin
 Jeff Thompson

Homebound:

Gladyce Ackerman John Buttler
 George Maxwell

W.E.L.C.A. News January 2007

Women's Bible Study
On Voicing our Laments
Psalms

Hope in God in Times of Suffering



Faith Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Jan. 9th in the Fireside Room. Hostess-Alice Roop. Bible Study Leader-Jean Franz. Questions? Call Jean Franz.

Phoebe Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Jan. 9th at the home of Cathy Warnock. Margaret Hangartner will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Charlotte Driskill.

W.E.L.C.A.BOARD Next meeting will be on Monday Jan. 8th at 6:30 p.m. in Bachman Hall.

For information call President, Christina Watson.



Sunday Morning
Coffee & Cookies

Thank you to Men In Mission for providing coffee and cookies in December. Phoebe Circle will be responsible in January.

Upcoming Events:

Fri. January 26th L.A.F.F. Night (Ladies' Active Friday Forums) Speaker Nancy Stafford "The Beauty of You!" Call Christina if interested.

Sat. January 27th Pacifica WELCA gathering from 9-1:00pm at Red Hill, Tustin. Call Christina if you need more info.

Sat. Feb. 3rd Cluster Planning Meeting here at Bethlehem from 9-1:00. Call Christina for info.

We Women ^{of the} ELCA 

A huge *THANK YOU* to Dianna Reynolds for opening her beautiful home for the WELCA Christmas Gathering. The Love gifts that were collected for WE CARE and SEAFARERS were generous and appreciated. I wish to thank WELCA for my beautiful Angel Ornament. It was a pleasure serving you as your president last year and I look forward to working/playing/praying with you all this year, Yours In Christ, Christina Watson

Some Hints for Health and Hope:

Think Hope – Tell the faith-story – Hug a Child – Say Yes – Pray for someone – Smile at a grouch – Worship the Lord – Forgive an enemy – Laugh out Loud – Pet a dog (or even a cat!) Know you are forgiven.



Thanks to Heidi Krazy and Arlene Pollard, our 2007 Yearbook is ready! Pick one up at your next Circle Meeting or in the Church Office.



Asian Symbol for Happy New Year!