



Bethlehem Star

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

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*From the
Pastor*



As I look back at those special times of celebration in my life, I quickly remember that preceding each of them was a time of preparation. Preparation

done so that when the day finally arrived, it would indeed be a special one. Whether it's a graduation day, confirmation day, birthday, wedding day, the birth of a child or any other special occasion, most often it was the preparation that allowed that day to be one of true celebration.

It seems like only yesterday that as Christians we journeyed through the season of Advent, our time to prepare ourselves so that Christmas would once again be a great day of celebrating our Savior's birth. Well, though one preparation time has been completed, as Christians we are not called to begin a new time of preparation. On February 21st we begin our Lenten journey. A journey that will remind us of who we are and who we are called to be. A journey that will help us focus on our Lord's journey as he heads to the cross for each of us. Our journey will begin with the ashes of Ash Wednesday and end as we stand beneath the cross of Jesus.

There are those who think they can skip and want to skip the Lenten journey, skit past the cross, and just celebrate on Easter morning, but the truth is that its only when we take this journey, watch and listen to all our Lord dared to do for us, and stand beneath His cross that we can truly understand why Easter morning is a great day of celebration.

So, I encourage you to take the Lenten journey with our worship family. Join us each Wednesday night beginning on the 21st and each Sunday during the Lenten season as we walk together with Jesus all the way to the cross. Of this I am confident, if we take this journey together, Easter morning will be a great day of celebration as we gather on Easter morning and here the words, "He is not here, He is risen!"

In Christ,

Pastor Will

Bible Collection



Bible Fellowship, a Westminister based organization, is collecting new and used bibles during the month of February.

These bibles will be shipped to countries where poverty and religious persecution prevent Christians from reading the Word of God.

Please collect your bibles and bring them to the church office and we will get them to Bible Fellowship. Thank you.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 21, 2007
7:00 pm service
in the Sanctuary

From The Council President

I am very excited to have been able to start the New Year with a full council. We held a planning meeting in early January to discuss plans and begin to establish priorities. My priority for this year is to strengthen the committee structure so that the church will have an endless corps of knowledgeable members ready to serve on the next council. I challenged each current member to recruit and train their successor.

The Transition Committee has almost finished its work and the council and I need to establish a Call Committee. A number of people volunteered through the Time and Talents survey and directly to me. If you wish to find out more about the call committee, contact me directly or through the church office. Soon I will have an orientation meeting to let interested people know the specific responsibilities of a call committee and how they need to progress toward making a call to a new permanent pastor. We will be extremely fortunate if we have that person with us by Christmas.

Jim Brandon is making a photo gallery of the council members to be placed in the narthex. This will make it easier for you to talk directly to the council member and volunteer for their committee. Thank you, Jim.

Thank you all who serve the church and keep it in your prayers.

Respectfully,

Bruce P. Gustafson

Education

The Education Committee, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct, development and promotion of school(s), teacher training and the educational activities of all organizations within the congregation. They will be responsible for providing nursery care.

The preparations for Vacation Bible School have been started and planning will begin soon. Margie Moeller will be the Chairman and Heidi Krcy will

be Registration and Advertising. When the dates have been determined, a sign-up sheet for volunteers will be posted in the narthex.

Worship and Music

The Worship and Music Committee has accepted the resignation of Carole Parmeter Dyer as she pursues an internship and ordination as a Lutheran minister. Carole and her husband, Tom, have enriched our services, in many dimensions, for which we are very thankful. Carole's ability to fill in when our minister's needed coverage was also unique and welcomed. The choir will especially miss seeing their son, Aidan, peeking through the base of the lectern at us as we rehearsed.

Their entire family, as well as the music and the musicians they brought to our church, will be sorely missed. They have been a spiritual inspiration to the choir and our congregation. We thank them for all they have contributed.

Committee members attended a workshop on Jan. 27, 2007 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Buena Park to review the new ELW hymnal.

Ushers Needed

My name is Marianne Sakowski, and I will be the Usher Coordinator for the year of 2007. We now have one service on Sunday morning, at 10:00 a.m. so we are all there together. I will need four(4) ushers each Sunday. Your duties will be to greet members and guests, to be available as needed for the service. We have communion two times a month normally but during Lent and Advent we will have communion every Sunday.

There will be an Usher training/review on Sunday morning February 18th at 8:30a.m. Please join us that morning if you can. Please call me if you would like to usher on a Sunday morning, it can be for one or more weeks. You are truly needed. Remember the ushers are sometimes the first people a visitor will meet upon their visit to our church

Why Do We Use Ashes on

Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice which many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. On Ash Wednesday ashes are a penitential substitute for water as a reminder of our baptism.

Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.

(From the E.L.C.A. Web Site- January 21,2007)

Life Together

Life Together Small Group will hold an organizational meeting after the service on Sunday, February 4th in the Fireside Room. Please join us to see what groups will be formed, those groups that are in the process of being formed and bring suggestions of any small group of interest to you.

Social Ministry

February brings to mind Valentines Day and our thoughts turn to LOVE! Hearts and Flowers, Chocolates and Cards -

Not only do we think of love of our families and friends but it also is a time to remind us of our love of our fellow humans beings who are less fortunate than us.

Historically, our members at Bethlehem have been extremely generous in supporting our larger communities with our monies and our time. Social Ministries of Bethlehem has many, many avenues to help out.

I urge you to follow your own personal passions to find the Ministry that best represents this passion for you. Some ways to help include -

- Saving your change and donating to Heifer Project - Recently a friend of mine had a Holiday party and asked that her guests not bring presents but bring all the change from their purses and pockets, from under their sofa cushions and that had been tossed into a jar or drawer - They filled THREE arks for us!!!!

WE CARE is in need of diapers sizes 4 and 5

- We will be collecting towels for the Navajo - watch for white sales

- We will be feeding the hungry at Judy's Kitchen during the year

- We will be bringing these and others to your attention throughout the year and hope you find many, many ways to show your love to your community.

Alice Roop

Church Council - Social Ministries

2006 Contribution Statements

Giving statements are ready for you to pick up in the narthex. If you did not receive one or have questions please call Richard in the office.

Valentines Day Dinner



The Youth Group will be hosting a Valentines Day dinner on February 11, 2007 in Bachman Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Reservations will be made on the patio or at the door, if one does make a reservation it would be helpful to let us know what time you expect to show up. Prices are five dollars for singles and ten dollars for couples and families. We will have a variety of pastas, sauces, and drinks.



We hope to see you there!

News from the Evangelism Committee

Evangelism is defined as "the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ." For many Christians, personally sharing our faith can be a scary experience. Even with the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide our words and touch the heart of the unbeliever, we hesitate. Yet, the Bible is clear about God's plan to use His disciples to spread His Word. This year, the Evangelism committee will focus on supporting our membership to welcome visitors and reach out to those around us in our every day live who do not know the Lord or do not have a church home. Look for newsletter article features and temple talks.

If this is a ministry you feel called to, please join our committee. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 18 after the worship service. Even is you are unable to attend the Evangelism committee meetings, you can still participate as you pray for our efforts.

February Council Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2007
7:30 p.m.
Fireside Room

Please join us each Wed. at 6 p.m. in
Bachman Hall for:



Serving are:

Feb. 21 Men In Mission
Feb. 28 Choir
Mar. 7 Youth group
Mar. 14
Mar. 21 Church Council
Mar. 28 WELCA

Thank you,
Parish Life Committee

"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.

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.

March Newsletter Deadline

Monday, February 19th (third Monday)
Please submit your articles by email or disc.

Vacation Bible School - VBS 2007

July 30 to August 3

Volunteers, Parents, Grandparents: Please mark your calendar and plan to participate and/or to bring your children and/or to bring your grandchildren to our Vacation Bible School this summer.



2/2		Mar Kvill
2/4	Monica Sabic	
2/5	Beau Clemens	
2/6	Sylvia Eden	
2/7	Sarah Sandvig	
2/8	Samm Boner	
2/9	Julie Anderson	
	Jennifer Sprengeler	
2/11	Jim Hargrove	
2/12	John Byone	
2/13	Lisa Gould	
2/15	Jim Brandon	
2/16	Susanne Adkins	
	Bob Van Tress	
2/17	Bruce Reynolds	
2/19	Tom Lange	
	Aiden Sandvig	
2/20	Darlene Staglin	
2/21	Saundra DeBourdieu	
	Jay Sabic	
2/22	Cindy Varalyai	
2/23	David Sakowski	
2/25	Tom Starmann	
2/27	Angela Roesner	
2/28	Luelle Buezis	
	Lois Cannon	
	Geraldine Knox	



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Pollard

2/11/2006	Deron & Jeannine Scott
2/14/1960	John & Janice Hunt
2/14/1986	Lowell & Elise Johnson
2/14/1964	Bill & Sandra DeBourdieu
2/25/1993	Jim Brandon & Carol Snyder

*How sweet coffee tastes!
Louder than a thousand kisses,
sweeter than Muscatel wine!"*

Johann Sebastian Bach (Coffee Cantata)

If your sentiments for coffee are the same as Bach's, we have great news for you. Beginning in February, the Youth Group will be selling Fair Trade Coffee from the Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project as an on-going fund-raiser. The Youth Group would like to thank Randy Upright for donating our start-up inventory of coffees. A display case will be outside the door of the Youth Room with the following varieties:

Café Salvador – Full City Roast – Drip Grind

Light wisps of almond and sweetness lead you to believe this coffee will be delicate, but rest assured, this 'all day' drinking coffee is more balanced than the scales of justice. Its remarkably soothing texture is one of the highlights of this coffee. Firm and unyielding with mellow body and soft acidity. (Available in 12 oz. bags)

Tanzanian Jubilee – Full City Roast – Drip Grind

Wild and exotic, the sweet spicy aroma of this East Africa coffee, grown at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro, is heavy and multi-dimensional. This coffee is rich, and the complexity is layered with vanilla, molasses, and hints of cherry and maple. Assertive and thick with a snappy bite. (Available in 12 oz. bags)

French Vanilla – Medium Roast – Drip Grind

A smooth and soothing aroma with rich vanilla flavor. (Available in 12 oz. bags)

Colombian CO2 Decaf – Full City Roast – Drip Grind

The aroma of this "typica" subspecies of Arabica coffee has a light citrus aroma with a touch of hazelnut. The brew itself has touches of honey, is well balanced, with sparkling acidity, smooth body and a memorable aftertaste. (Available in 12 oz. bags)

Fellowship Blend – Full City Roast – Percolator Grind

A smooth and full-bodied coffee specially prepared for use in percolators. This delicious coffee is grown by small farmer cooperatives in El Salvador. (Available in 1 lb. bags)

Fellowship Blend Decaf – Full City Roast – Percolator Grind

Full-bodied and well-balanced with a rich, smooth flavor. Naturally decaffeinated with CO2, this coffee is grown by indigenous cooperatives in the mountains of Colombia. (Available in 1 lb. bags)

Orders can be taken for other varieties of coffee such as coffee packaged in pillow packs for Bunn 12-cup coffee makers, organic coffees and flavored coffees. Also available for ordering are organic teas, organic cocoa and organic chocolate. **Fair Trade Coffee and the Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project**

The Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Coffee Project is an innovative way to help people in need through LWR. As Christians we can address a consumer dilemma by buying coffee that is fairly traded. Through the project, farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia earn a fairer share of income, have access to services that are otherwise unavailable, and gain a trading partner they can trust, a fair trade organization called Equal Exchange. At the same time, congregations in the U.S. enjoy fellowship and learn more about the world, its economy and our part in it.

Equal Exchange negotiates directly with the farmers' co-ops and has developed pricing standards which at least cover the cost of production plus a modest profit. No matter how the coffee market fluctuates, the farmer's are guaranteed a minimum price for their coffee should the market fall to a lower price. Also, before the establishment of Equal Exchange, farmers would rarely see the benefits of a high price in the world market for their coffee because profits would first go to middlemen, brokers, traders, wholesalers and retailers.

Equal Exchange also provides advance credit to co-ops for their coffee. This helps fill the gap from harvest to harvest so the farmers can take care of their farms and themselves, and in the long run it keeps them out of debt. This extension of credit at fair rates also helps keep the farmer from "betting the farm" by doing business with those who require the farm land as collateral and charge high interest rates.

Equal Exchange also works with co-ops to emphasize care for the environment. They encourage organic and shade grown agriculture. Coffee is actually a shade crop and is traditionally grown in the shade of fruit and other shade trees. Corporations and large landowners have developed full sun hybrid coffee plants and taken over large tracts of land and used chemicals to keep control of the crop. As a result, the area experiences erosion, loss of habitat and bio-diversity. The shade trees are needed as habitats for local wildlife and migratory song birds. Equal Exchange provides an incentive for organic farming by paying a premium for certified organically grown coffee.

From the Equal Exchange information bulletin: "Because it is such a vital commodity, coffee can be a tool for the positive change for poor communities across the Developing World. And your congregation can be part of this effort by considering something as simple as the cup of coffee you share in fellowship."

W.E.L.C.A. News

February 2007

Women's Bible Study

The Book of Job

Session 6

Hope in God in Times of Suffering



Faith Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Feb. 6th in the Fireside Room. Hostess-Luelle Buezis Bible Study Leader-Pastor Mark Will. Questions? Call Jean Franz.

Phoebe Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Feb. 13th at the home of Debby Gustafson Margaret Hangartner will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Charlotte Driskill.

W.E.L.C.A.BOARD Next meeting will be on Monday Feb. 5th at 6:30 p.m. in Bachman Hall.

For information call President, Christina Watson.



Sunday Morning

Coffee & Cookies

Thank you to Phoebe Circle for providing coffee and cookies in January. Faith Circle will be responsible in February.

Upcoming Events:



Sat. Feb. 3rd Cluster Planning Meeting here at Bethlehem from 9:30-11:00. Call Christina for info.

Sat. Mar. 3rd Mission Areas Awareness Day (MADD) from 9:30-2:00pm at King of Glory, Fountain Valley. Hands on project making fleece blankets to Orangewood Children's Home & Precious Life Shelter. Cost: \$5.00 Call Christina if you can attend.

Put your



into Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls

This is the Churchwide theme for 2007.

Several women from Bethlehem attended the "Journey to Wellness" Information Exchange on January 27 where we enjoyed hearing Pastor Patricia Hoenshell speak on our journey together to wellness.



Happy Valentine's Day!

More Hints for Health and Hope:

Encourage a friend * Listen to an elder * Get plenty of sleep* Wear your seat belt * Laugh just for fun *

Stop and marvel at the beauty of nature



SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday March 17th 9:00-11:00

Spring Brunch and General Meeting

Guest Speaker to be announced.