



Bethlehem Star

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

Volume 48, Issue 1

January, 2008

*From the
Pastor*



Corinthians 1:4, - "I give thanks to my God always for you..."

Ephesians 1: 16 - "I do not cease to give thanks for you..."

Philippians 1:3 - "I thank my God every time I remember you..."

As seen in the verses above in most of Paul's letters to the early churches he began with a word of thanks to the faithful. As we begin another year I would like to once again follow his example by thanking each of you for being faithful to the ministry of our congregation and the church at large. I count it as a blessing to be able to serve as your pastor and I look forward to working with you as we carry out the ministry God has called us to as the Bethlehem congregation.

Kathleen and I also want to thank you for making the installation Sunday such a special day. Thanks to:

Vanessa, Marynell and the choir for the special music

Wilkie for assisting at worship

Richard for getting things ready for the day

Ken for video taping the service

Bruce, Marianne, Darren, Monica for taking part in the installation

Marianne and all who helped with the wonderful reception

Bishop Finck for being with us and presiding at the service

It was a special and happy occasion for me, as I hope it was for you.

We also thank everyone who came to our open house. What a great time it was to have the chance to be together as the church family during this busy time of the year. And finally we thank everyone who remembered us with cards and gifts both on installation Sunday and during the holiday. We appreciate your love and kindness.

Well, one year has ended and now we move into another one as the family of Bethlehem. I'm sure God

has many things in store for us in this new year. I invite you to join me as we begin to plan for the future of our worship family, as we give God our thanks and praise, and as we dare to be a church alive in the spirit. Together we can continue the good things that go on here at Bethlehem. Together we can care for each other. Together we can grow in faith. Together we can find new ways to be the church and to reach out to those who are bit yet among us.

I close with what I said at the installation. I thank you for the privilege of being your pastor and now I invite you to join me on the journey of being the church in the coming year.

May God richly bless you with his love in this new year!

Pastor Will

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 27th

immediately following the worship service.

in

Bachman Hall

(We will hear and vote to approve the 2007 reports and discuss a change in language in one item in the By-Laws)

Church Council Calendar

Council Workshop: Wed., Jan. 2nd 7:00 pm, Fireside Rm

Council Meeting: Wed., Jan. 9th 7:00 pm, Fireside Rm

2007 reports are due by Mon., Jan. 7th - please be prompt
Feb., 2008 newsletter deadline is Mon., Jan. 21st

2008 Church Council

Marianne Sakowski	President
Bruce Gustafson	Vice President
Andrea Campbell	Secretary
Christina Watson	Treasurer
Rev. Mark Will	Pastor
J.R. Anderson	Worship & Music
Bob Campbell	Parish Life
Fritz Campbell	Evangelism
Katrina Gary	Youth Representative
Dale Retrum	Stewardship
Dianna Reynolds	Finance
Bill Ritz	Archives
Dan Sakowski	Youth
Anne Tegtmeier	Education
James Toth	Social Ministry
Cathy Warnock	Property

Get A Grip

Are you one of the multitude who needs to *Get a Grip* in one or more areas of your life?

Perhaps you are someone who makes New Year's resolutions to lose those extra pounds, get your finances in order, or have your schedule run smoothly?

We have all had times in our life when we have felt totally OUT OF CONTROL!!

If this sounds like you, plan to join our Small Group six-week session. Using Bill Hybelos' book, *Finding Balance in your Daily Life--Getting A Grip* you will learn how to use biblical insights and practical steps to secure a Christ-centered life that will get you into control in five vital areas of your life - your time, your health, your finances, your spiritual life and your relationships. This group will begin Monday, January 14 at 7 p.m. at the home of Alice Roop

Looking forward to seeing you there!!!!

Lutheran Course II - Don't miss it!

1. If you missed the Lutheran Course we will offer it again in the future, but starting on Sunday, January 13th, at 9 a.m. we will begin the Lutheran Course II. Our topics will be:

7 Sessions

“How to Tell the Difference between the Theology of the Cross and the Theology of Glory”

Topic: How does God work?

A conversation with Timothy J. Wengert, professor of Reformation History at The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA

“How to Tell if Your Will Is in Bondage and What to Do about It”

Topic: Why do we do things we know we shouldn't do?

A conversation with April Uring Larson, Bishop, LaCrosse Area Synod in LaCrosse, WI

“How to Receive God's Grace Daily”

Topic: How are we saved?

A conversation with Lawrence J. Clark, executive director, Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta, GA

“How to Tell the Difference between a Sinner and a Saint”

Topic: If we're saved, why do we still sin?

A conversation with Martha E. Stortz, professor of Historical Theology and Ethics, and Jane Strohl, associate professor of Church History at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA

“How to Identify a ‘Neighbor’ and What This Means for Lutherans”

Topic: If we're saved, can we do whatever we want?

A conversation with Peter T. Nash, visiting professor of Religion at Wartburg College in Waverly, IA

“How to Tell the Difference between the Kingdom on the Left and the Kingdom on the Right”

Topic: Should Christians be involved in the world?

A conversation with Stephen P. Bouman, Bishop, Metropolitan New York Synod in New York, NY

“How to Tell the Difference between a ‘Vocation’ and a ‘Vacation’”

Topic: Can we make a difference in this world?

A conversation with Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN

Even if you missed the Lutheran Course you are encouraged to join us for the next 8 weeks as we look at and discuss some of our key Lutheran beliefs. Just remember January 13th, 9 a.m., in the Fireside room

St. Olaf College Choir in California

The St. Olaf Lutheran College Choir from Northfield Mn. will have a concert at the First United Methodist Church in Pasadena on February 7th at 7:30 p.m. They will also perform at Copley Symphony Hall in San Diego on Feb. 9th at 2:30 p.m. These concerts are part of their National tour. If you would like tickets or more information call 1-800-363-5487 or visit their website: www.stolaftickets.com.

Applying Bible Principles

"God Owns It All" is the chapter heading in a book by a Christian author who presents this chapter first as the foundation for money management and giving.

God does own it all! That is the teaching of Psalm 24:1 which says, "The earth is the Lord's." Psalm 50:10 says that all of the beasts of the field belong to God, and that the cattle on a thousand hills are His. Haggai 2:8 says that God even owns the silver and gold in all the mines.

Now, He allows us to use what rightfully belongs to Him, but God continues to retain the ownership. We are managers and stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Someday, when we stand before Him, we shall give an account of what kind of job we have done in managing the resources which God has allowed us to use.

That's why every spending decision becomes a spiritual decision. Every time we use some of God's money, we are making a decision which has eternal ramifications.

Are you using money and possessions as if they belong to you, or are you making spending decisions with the full realization that it all belongs to God?

Youth Meeting - January 27, 2008

6:00 p.m. in Bachman Hall

Youth and parents are invited to a planning meeting for the Youth Ministry (primarily serving youth ages 11-18). Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this meeting to help give direction for our ministry planning for the new year.

Flowers for Worship, 2008

You can help us have flowers to enrich our worship this year. You might remember that in our budget this year we weren't able to budget enough to cover all the flowers that are not paid for by our members. One of the things that has happened in 2007 is that



there were some Sundays when we would have 3 or 4 arrangements. We know that for some there is a special reason why you want flowers on a given Sunday, but for those who can be flexible as to the date we would encourage you to pick a Sunday when we don't already have two dedications. This will help us fill in the gaps without having to use budgeted money. We would also ask that if you dedicate flowers that you pay for them before the Sunday of the dedication. This year the flowers will be \$20 per arrangement. Thanks for your help in making sure we have flowers each week.

We still have plenty of "Arks" to fill!

Thank you to all who continue to collect their change for the Heifer Project. With the new year, we will start buying different animals. Easter is on the way, so in January we will buy geese, in February we will buy ducks and in March we will buy flocks of chicks.

Here's what Heifer tells us about why the geese are a good choice:

"Geese make a great gift, and here's why: Since some geese can lay up to 75 eggs a year, even "six geese a-laying" can add up quickly for families in desperate need of protein and a means of income. Geese are easy to care for because they don't require much shelter and can adapt to hot, wet or cold weather. Geese can also find a good portion of their food by themselves, and they efficiently dispose of weed seeds and gobble up insects, slugs and snails.

Best of all, geese are highly efficient producers of animal protein. And they're vigilant "watchdogs," loudly warning when uninvited guests arrive at the homestead."

So, keep those quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies coming!

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson's Christmas Message 2007

"Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way..." (Matthew 1:18).

Many generations after God promised a Messiah, a young girl named Mary conceived a child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, the young man to whom she was betrothed, was told by an angel that the child she would bear was God's Son, Jesus.

God's power and blessing worked through common lives to bring forth Jesus the Messiah. Joseph and Mary, ordinary young adults nurtured by the generations before them, were open to God's extraordinary activity in their lives. They were common people whose willing hearts and courage powerfully proclaimed the Good News of the one who would save his people from their sins.

Countless generations later, you and I are called to proclaim the Good News of Emmanuel, "God with us." Our neighborhoods, our communities, and our world are filled with those who long to know Jesus' love and saving presence in their lives. God uses us in all our ordinariness and sinfulness to bring forth the promise and light of Christ's love and salvation.

This Christmas, may the Holy Spirit give you faith, courage, and a willing heart as you take part in God's ongoing miracle. May you know the joy and awe that comes from bearing Christ's creative and redeeming love to the world.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Men

in

Mission Support for Navajo Lutheran Mission

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

2. 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 13th, 2008, so we can arrange to have them delivered to the reservation.

4. Children's Clothing – Children's clothing in all sizes is needed.

6. 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.

“Scramble” Golf Tournament in March

The next Bethlehem Golf Tournament is on Saturday, March 8th, 2008, 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 am 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 \$75 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 23rd. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex. If you have questions please contact Dale

Retrum at (714) 527-4337 or (562) 982-5732.

Property Committee

The Property Committee made great progress on repairs and upgrades in 2007 and has more projects slated for 2008.

Many thanks to the fantastic committee of Ernie Mazzari, Dave Sandvig, John Buezis Sr., Rev. Mark Will, John Buezis Jr., Jim Hargrove, Marianne Sakowski, Bill Haglund, Richard Toth, Lon and Cathy Warnock, and "adoptees" Eric Dobberteen (Legal) and Ron Clausen (Electrical).

Thanks also for the support from the Bethlehem congregation, WELCA, PaperRollers and the Memorial Fund.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 14th at 7:30 p.m.

From Shirley's Kitchen

Apple Crisp

No Substitutes!

6 -7 Pippin Apples

3/4 Cup Sugar

3/4 Cup Flour

{ 1 tsp. Cinnamon }

{ 1Tbsp. Sugar } Mix Together

1/3 Cup Soft Butter

1/2 Cup Water

Peel & slice apples - spread apples in an 8" x 8" baking dish. Pour water over apples & sprinkle sugar & cinnamon mixture over them. Mix flour, sugar, & butter together until it is a crumb mixture. Sprinkle crumb mixture over apples & bake at 350 deg. for 40 minutes or until brown on top.

Super Good - Serve Warm!

What Can I Do?

If you've considered other ways that you can help with the activities of the church but aren't sure of where your particular talents or interests fit, let's take a look at some of the things that go on at Bethlehem:

Worship - You could help with the Altar Guild, volunteer to usher at the worship service, assist the pastor on communion Sundays, sing in the choir, try your hand at ringing the bells, play or sing special music, help with organizing the pew racks, serve as a reader.

Education- help is needed with Sunday School as a substitute teacher, teach or help with set-up during Vacation Bible School, work on the Library, help organize education materials, serve as a substitute Nursery Attendant.

Property - there is always a need for help on special work days, painting, gardening projects and general repairs.

Evangelism - you could volunteer with contacting inactive members or contacting visitors and prospective members.

Parish Life - there are so many things to do! Paper Rollers, bowling league, bridge group, . dramas, golf tournaments, group outings to baseball games, concerts, plays, the many activities of the women's group, W.E.L.C.A., and men's group, Men in Mission.

Finance - you could help with the counting of the offerings, help with record keeping and the annual audit.

Social Ministry - besides serving at We Care and Judy's Kitchen there are many areas where donations are always welcome: WeCare, Heifer Project, Pastor's Pantry, Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Relief, Food for the Poor, Lutheran Camps, Lutheran Blind Mission, and more.

There are many other areas that need your help. Please contact your council representatives to see how you can contribute to the ministries of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

W.E.L.C.A. News

January 2008

Women's Bible Study The Beatitudes-Session 5 Theme verse Matthew 5:6



“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

W.E.L.C.A. BOARD Next meeting will be on Jan. 7th, 2008, 6:30p.m. in Bachman Hall. For information call President, Dianna Reynolds

Faith Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Jan. 8th Hostess- Mary Ann Wilson. Janice Hunt will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Luelle Buezis

Phoebe Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Jan 8th at the home of Cathy Warnock. Margaret Hangartner will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Charlotte Driskill



Sunday Morning Coffee & Cookies

Thank you Men in Mission for providing coffee and cookies in December. Phoebe Circle will be responsible in January, Faith Circle in February.

Upcoming Events:



Sat. Feb. 23rd 9-11am President's Planning meeting for Spring Cluster Event. Our Redeemer, Seal Beach.

Sat. Mar. 1st 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. One-Day Gathering of the Pacifica Women of the ELCA. Hope Lutheran Church, Temecula.



Bazaar Fund Allocation Update:

The \$500, which the women had previously allocated for the recording system, is no longer needed. We will need to vote to re-allocate the funds at the Spring General Meeting.

New Year's Resolution 2008

Ladies, as you are thinking of what you are resolving to commit to for the 2008 year, please consider making the following commitment:

I will make a commitment to invite one or more women to our Spring Brunch, held on Saturday, March 15th or I will invite someone to attend one of the Circle Meetings with me. An invitation is all it takes sometimes to encourage another to attend one of our events or meetings. Invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers or even your hairdresser. A personal invitation is the best way to include people in our activities and show them our hospitality.



Many thanks to Debby Gustafson for opening her home and also, many thanks to all of you wonderful women who brought Love Gifts for the Seafarers and We Care. We had 32 beautiful women that attended our Christmas Gathering and enjoyed “*Ringin' in the Spirit*”



Check out Pacifica Partners on line www.pacificawomen.org click on news & events



A smile is a curve that straightens things out!