



Bethlehem Star

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

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*From the
Pastor*



Are We Ready to Grow?

My hope and vision is that we would continue and find new ways to grow as a congregation. I would guess

that you have that same vision. We certainly want to grow in our spiritual journeys as individuals and as a congregation. We certainly want and need to continue our growth in the area of worship, education endeavors, in our out reach to the community and world, in our stewards, in our sharing of the gospel with others, as well as to grow in numbers. Over the next few months I want to address some key thoughts about how we can make this growth continue to take place and some steps we need to take to head in that direction.

So where do we begin in this growth process? Growth within a congregation begins with an attitude that is focused on growing and on a commitment to make it happen. In Kelly Fryer's book, "Reclaiming the 'L' Word," she says that all Lutheran churches say they want to grow, but in reality only a small percentage really mean it and are willing to do what it takes to make growth happen. For many Lutherans growth is one of those scary words. A growth process may mean change and changes might happen. Growth may mean that new ideas may come along with new people. Growth means a commitment to a process that will not happen over night. Growth means being willing to risk trying new things and even failing at times. Growth means forgetting words we like to say so much like "It won't work here," "We'll chase people away," "we've tried it before and it didn't work," "we don't have the money or people to do that," "we've never done it that way before," and "it's just not Lutheran." Growth might mean that we have to venture out of our comfort

zone to reach out to the comfort zones of others. Growth means that we all must be committed to doing what it takes to make growth a real possibility. Growth means we must be a team working together, each of us as I mentioned in the sermon on the 20th, being willing to be the best evangelist Bethlehem church has. Growth means that each of us must be willing to be a key part of our Bethlehem team and be willing to keep a positive attitude about what happens within our congregation.

So are we ready to grow? It begins with an attitude that says yes we want to grow, we're willing to do what it takes to make growth a reality, we're willing to do our part in the journey, and we're willing to be the evangelist God needs us to be. Will you join me in taking on this attitude that will make growth a real possibility?

In Christ,
Pastor Will

Next month: Step 2: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

7:00 pm service in the Sanctuary

Rev. Rich Ajer will lead our worship service

Please join us for the 6:00 pm
Soup & Salad Supper
Hosted by Men in Mission

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)

Lenten Schedule

Wednesday, Feb. 6	Ash Wednesday	7:00 pm
Wednesday, Feb. 13, 20, 27		
March 5, 12	Lenten Services	7:00 pm
Sunday, March 16	Palm Sunday	10:00 am
Thursday, March 20	Maundy Thursday	7:00 pm
Friday, March 21	Good Friday	7:00 pm
Saturday, March 22	Vigil of Easter	3-6 pm
Sunday, March 23	Easter Sunday	10:00 am

From Your Council President

Become Involved.....

The 2008 Council Members are already busy with their assigned duties and responsibilities. Your help is needed to set and work toward their goals this year. This is the year that we would like to see every member become involved with the church doings.

Opportunities include:

- Serving on a committee
- Helping the property committee on work days.
- Helping in the office for special projects.
- Joining the Handbell Choir or the Senior Choir.
- Serving on the Altar Guild.
- Becoming active in one of the women's circles.
- Helping to rebuild our Youth program by becoming a youth advisor.
- Giving ideas to the Parish Life Committee for church activities.
- Serving as an usher or reader on Sunday mornings or for the evening services.
- Becoming a media technician.
- Most of all, say "Yes" when you are called to serve.

Our church will grow with the help of every member working together.

A few people can't do it all, but a lot of people can.

Respectfully,
Marianne Sakowski

Please join us each Wednesday at 6 p.m.
in Bachman Hall for Soup & Salad Supper

Serving are:

- Feb. 6 Men In Mission
- Feb.13 Choir
- Feb. 20 Youth group
- Feb. 27
- Mar. 5 Church Council
- Mar. 12 WELCA

Thank you,
Parish Life Committee

2008 Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, February 3, 2008
Immediately following worship service

Pot Luck meal will be served
(Please bring a salad for 12)

We will review and approve the 2007 Annual Report
We will also discuss and vote on a language change
in the By-Laws

All Voting Members are encouraged to attend,
including Youth.

(A voting member is one who is confirmed, has
recorded attendance and contribution within the last
year)

Next Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 13th
8:00 pm (after service)
Fireside Room

March, 2008 Newsletter Deadline

Monday, Feb. 18th (3rd Monday of the month)
Please submit your articles by email or disc.

2007 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 host a
Valentines Day dinner on February 10,
2008 in Bachman Hall from 6:00 - 9:00
p.m. Reservations can be made on the
patio after worship service, or at the
door. Prices are \$3 for singles, \$5 for
couples and \$10 for families. We hope to see you
there!

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:

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 13th, 2008, 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.

“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.



2/1	George Egbert
2/2	Mark Will
2/4	Monica Sabic
2/5	Beau Clemens
2/6	Sylvia Eden
2/7	Sarah Sandvig
2/8	Samm Boner
2/9	Julie Anderson
2/11	Jim Hargrove
2/12	John Byone
2/15	Jim Brandon
2/16	Bob Van Tress
2/17	Bruce Reynolds
2/19	Tom Lange
	Aiden Sandvig
2/20	Darlene Staglin
2/21	Saundra DeBourdieu
	Jay Sabic
2/23	David Sakowski
2/27	Angela Roesner
2/28	Luelle Buezis
	Lois Cannon
	Geraldine Knox



2/ 7/1959	Arlene & William Pollard
2/11/2006	Deron & Jeannine Scott
2/14/1960	John & Janice Hunt
2/14/1986	Lowell & Elise Johnson
2/14/1964	Bill & Saundra DeBourdieu
2/25/1993	Jim Brandon & Carol Snyder

A Pacifica Synod P.A.L.L.M. Event and You're Invited!

On Saturday, March 29th, at the new synod Center for Mission and Learning in Santa Ana, there will be a seminar called, "Marketing as Servant Leadership." The keynote speaker will be Beth Lewis, the president and CEO for Augsburg Fortress. The word marketing is often avoided by church leaders. Beth will help congregational leaders understand how marketing can and should be used by Christians to proclaim the Gospel and invite others into the Body of Christ. By the end of the session you will have a clear understanding of "Marketing 101" and how it can be applied to the life of the congregation in reaching out neighbors. More information will come in future bulletins. Please let the pastor know if you are interested in attending.

Top 10 Float Flowers for Rose Parade 2008: (Source: www.HGTV.com)

10. Anthurium
9. Statice
8. Lily
7. Orchid
6. Strawflower
5. Gerbera Daisy
4. Gladiolus
3. Chrysanthemum
2. Carnation
1. ROSE!

Visit our online Photo Gallery to see Bethlehem Petal Pushers handling some of these popular flowers and a surprise citrus fruit! To get straight to our Petal Pusher pictures, enter the following URL:
<http://blcla.org/BethlehemGallery2007/Petal-Pushers-Dec-30-2007>

Property Committee

A new wall oven and dishwasher have been installed at the parsonage. These were purchased with funds from last Fall's bazaar, which the women of the congregation voted to approve last October. Thank you, W.E.L.C.A.! And a BIG THANK YOU to the Paper Rollers for funding our new telephone system! We are so blessed to have so many who help improve our church and parsonage, thank you.

Applying Bible Principles

When he was president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Gordon MacDonald said, "One of the greatest teachings missing in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us."

We own nothing. We have been given material means to use, but not to own. All that we have belongs to God. He is our Source according to Psalm 62:5. We are only managers and stewards of what He has entrusted to us. Because all that we have belongs to God, and because He gives us the ability to obtain wealth, every spending decision is in reality a spiritual decision. According to 1 Corinthians 10:31, our constant goal must be to glorify God in all of life, including how we use His resources.

Stephen Olford wrote this: "... man's chief end is 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' We are to glorify God by our worshipful praise (Psalm 50:23). We are to glorify Him by our consistent fruit bearing (John 15:8). We are to glorify Him by our spiritual unity (Rom. 15:6). We are to glorify Him by our entire dedication (1 Cor. 6:20). And we are to glorify Him by our good works (Matt. 5:16). In this last category is included the matter of giving. Only in this way can we provide for 'honest things in the sight of the Lord.' The glory of God should motivate us to give and to give our best."

If our goals and ambitions are truly set on spiritual things, if our emphasis in life is to glorify God, we will use the funds He has "loaned" to us on a temporary basis to glorify Him. We will put His money and possessions to good use by giving to His work and by storing up "treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:19-21).

There are two key questions to be asked concerning money and possessions: First, are you glorifying God in how you are using the money and possessions He has entrusted to you? And second, are you viewing these things as yours or as His?



Remember these members and friends in prayer:

Hospitalized:

Scott Mizener (nephew of Lu Buezis)

Undergoing treatment:

Gladyce Ackerman

Julie Anderson (Richard Toth's sister)

Adeline Beemer (Lynn Roesner's mother) - lymphoma

Joan Bissing (friend of Charlotte Driskill) - cancer

Joe & Barbara Bull (friends of Mary Seibert)

Julie Davis - rheumatoid arthritis

Sara DeWeese - cancer

Katrina Gary

Lenora Jones (friend of Lynne Estabrook)

Jack Lyons

Jim Mauritzen (friend of the Hunts) - cancer

Tony & Lynn Miles (friends of Jim Brandon & Carol Snyder)

Shirley Moleneux (Betty Jacobs' niece) - cancer

Ingrid & Joel Origel (friends of Joen Coleman) - cancer

Eva Payne (Jim Brandon's cousin) - pulmonary disease

Joyce Rekstad - lupus

Didith Oakes (Sigrun Borneo's sister-in-law)

Bob Piper (neighbor of Sigrun Borneo)

Carol Reid (friend of Jamie Slade) - brain cancer

Lynn Roesner

Janis Sabic

Recuperating:

Julie Anderson - kidney cancer

Erik Bonwit

Sigrun Borneo

Marjorie Chapman - hip surgery

Lynne Estabrook

Joshua Gimbel (Betty Jacobs' great-grandson)

- brain surgery

Stuart Gordon (brother-in-law of Sigrun Borneo)

Pat Greene (Carol Snyder's cousin) - cancer

Betty Jacobs

Genevieve Jenkins

Katherine Lindell

Charlie Lyons

Herman Meier (Heidi Krazy's cousin) - stroke

Kristine Parkinson (The Lindell's daughter) - pancreatitis

Jackie Phillips (Ron Clausen's sister) - multiple sclerosis

Robert Redford - radiculopathy

Virginia Robinson

Convalescent or Care Facility:

Ruth Hudson

Jeanette Olmstead

Ruth Precker

Jean Rich

Jeff Thompson

Military in Harm's Way:

Evan Jones (Cathy Warnock's nephew) - returning to Iraq

Matt Purtell (Krissy Retrum's cousin) - in Iraq

Chris Rogers - in Iraq

Chad Schweam (friend of Joen Coleman) - 3rd tour in Iraq

Fall Stewardship Emphasis a Success

The reaction of the congregation to the Fall Stewardship emphasis, entitled “Walk with Jesus – Walk, Listen, Give,” were very gratifying. Thanks to all of you that responded. Emphasis was that giving should not be based on what the church needs but rather on giving thanks to God for all that we have been given. Giving generously of our time and talents was also emphasized.

Here are the results:

1. Pledges received were 81 – Last year there were 60.
2. Total Dollars Pledged was \$202,691. Last year was \$154,730.
3. Time and Talent Sheets received were 68.

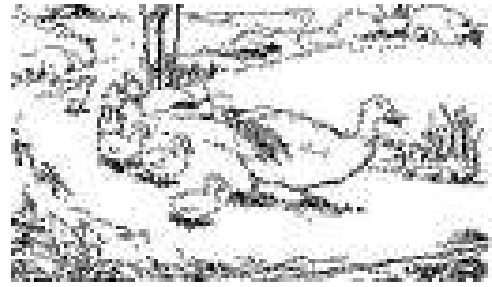
A balanced Budget for 2008 was prepared based on these Pledges plus a projected estimate for Giving Units that did not pledge. Pray that our giving throughout the coming year will be as pledged and that it will allow us to fully maintain the ministry program at Bethlehem.

Stewardship On-Going Throughout the Year 2008

For 2008 we have implemented a Stewardship Emphasis program that will be on-going throughout the year. It will include a special article for each Newsletter, a monthly Scripture verse and principle in each Bulletin, a monthly Temple Talk on the monthly principle, a once-a-month discussion subject for the Sunday School classes, and a Fall Campaign. As with recent effort, emphasis will remain that giving should not be based on what the church needs but rather on giving thanks to God for all that we have been given. The Stewardship Committee could use some additional help with this effort. If interested, please contact Dale Retrum.

Paper or Plastic?...Say, “Paper”

We Care needs your paper grocery bags, especially those with handles! Please drop off one, ten, one hundred, any amount of bags in the We Care collection box in the narthex (located near the front door). Thank you.



For the month of February, we will be purchasing ducks for the Heifer Project. Here is what Heifer has to say why ducks make a good purchase:

“Ducks are delightful creatures – good for both people and the environment. Ducks add protein to a project partner's diet from eating eggs, money in their pockets from selling eggs and ducks, and better crops in the fields, as ducks remove weeds and bugs and add fertilizer. In Xiang Qian, China, ducks are as much as tripling some families' incomes. People like Zonglin Zhou began with a starter flock of ducklings, and now they manage hundreds of ducks that enable them to send their children to school and offer them secure futures.”

Thank you to those who contributed in January. With your donations, we purchased seven flocks of geese.



Planning to buy chocolate for your Valentine?

We have plenty of chocolate candy bars for sale. Stop by the coffee kiosk on the patio after church. Choose Milk Chocolate with Hazelnut, Dark Chocolate with Almonds, Mint Chocolate or Dark Chocolate with Espresso Beans. We also still have plenty of Hot Chocolate Mix. We even have Baking Chocolate in case you want to make a decadent chocolate dessert for your sweetie!

W.E.L.C.A. News

February 2008

Women's Bible Study The Beatitudes-Session 6 Theme verse Matthew 5:7



Mercy Made Real: Disciples as
Forgiven Forgivers

W.E.L.C.A. BOARD Next meeting will be on Feb. 4th, 2008, 6:30p.m. in Bachman Hall. For information call President, Dianna Reynolds.

Faith Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Feb. 5th Hostess-Margie Moeller. Jean Franz will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Luelle Buezis.

Phoebe Circle Next meeting will be on Tues. Feb. 12th. at the home of Dianna Reynolds. Margaret Hangartner will lead the Bible Study. Questions? Call Charlotte Driskill.



Sunday Morning Coffee & Cookies

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

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.

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Take twelve whole months. Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate, and jealousy. Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once. Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.

Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work.

Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness. Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed.

Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play,

and a cup full of humor.

Pour all of this into a vessel of love. Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness,

unselfishness, and cheerfulness.

You're bound to have a Happy New Year!

Ladies Spring Brunch

Mark your calendars for a morning

full of enjoyment. Spring Brunch and General Meeting.

Save the date:

Saturday, March 15, 2008

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

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