



Bethlehem Star

The Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Los Alamitos, California

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*From the
Pastor*



Are we a welcoming congregation?

As you know the past few months I have been addressing some key thoughts relating to the question "Are we ready to grow?" In January I talked

about us having an attitude that allows growth to take place. Then last month I talked about the fact that if we want people to join us we need to let them know that we are here and I concluded with the comment that our growth will largely depend on each of us telling others about the mission and life of Bethlehem. So what comes next?

Well if we let people know we are here and invite them to come and see, then our next step is to make sure that when they do come, they truly feel welcomed among us. Doesn't this sound so obvious and easy? Well in a way it is, but the truth is it takes an effort on all of our parts to make sure it really happens. It's so easy on Sunday morning to get into our own little world that we forget to welcome our Sunday morning guest. It's so easy to get caught up with visiting with our church friends we haven't seen for a week that we overlook the guest among us at worship or at fellowship. It's so easy to think, "well someone else will greet them and welcome them." It's so easy to say, "well I'm not good at talking to new people." And, it's so easy to think, "Well what if I approach them and I find out that they are actually members here already? How embarrassing that would be."

Well here's something we know is true. If a guest comes and doesn't feel welcomed they will likely not return. And even more important is that most likely we will get only one chance to make someone feel welcomed among us. If a guest can come in and get out without feeling welcomed they will likely move on to another congregation in their search to find a church family to join.

So what can you do? Well here's just a few suggestions that will help make us a welcoming church family to our guest:

1. If you see a guest in the parking lot introduce yourselves and walk with them into the building. You might even want to invite them to sit with you for worship.

2. If you see a guest sitting around you at worship introduce yourself, welcome them, and ask them if they are familiar with our worship service. Tell them if they have any questions about the service that you'd be glad to answer or help.

3. If you are sitting by a guest when it comes time for communion invite them to follow you so they won't feel lost or confused.

4. If you meet a guest introduce them to other members. Invite them to the coffee time, but if you don't leave them stranded by themselves. If a guest goes to the fellowship time and ends up standing by themselves, they will likely not come back. So, if you see a guest at the fellowship time introduce yourself. Let them share with you about themselves, ask if you can answer any questions about our church family, and when they leave invite them to join us again soon.

5. If you are sitting by a guest hand them a worship registration card and tell them the ushers will pick them up during the hymn after the sermon. Make sure you fill one out as well with all the information. If they don't see you filling one out they may not either. If they see you only putting your name on the card that will likely be all they do. It is so important that our guest fill these cards out so that we can make a follow up contact with them to let them know how thankful we were for them being part of our worship family. **The truth is that** right now only about 1 in 20 of our guests fill our these cards.

Well, these are just a few things you can do. My hope is that no guest will come and be part of our worship family without meeting at least 5 or 6 of our

members before they leave and being invited to join us again. Are we ready to grow? Part of this answer will depend on how welcoming we are to our guests. You can make the difference of whether someone leaves and doesn't come back or returns to be part of our Bethlehem family.

In Christ,
Pastor Will

Applying Bible Principles

There are some wonderful principles in the Old Testament which apply to present-day Christians. One of these is in Deuteronomy 8:10-18. Stated in contemporary language, it says, "When you have eaten and are full, when your cars, houses and bank accounts multiply, don't forget where it came from: Remember the Lord your God."

In truth, all that we have comes from God. He determines what we will receive, whether it be money, gold, silver, houses, land, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, etc. It all belongs to Him in the first place, and He entrusts it to us. According to David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29, riches, honor, power, and wealth all come from God.

That's why there is no such thing as a self-made man or woman. Oh, we have to do our part. God's plan is not that we just sit around praying and reading the Bible all day long so that what we need to survive will miraculously drop into our hands. We're not just to pray for "our daily bread," but we're also to get up each day and work for it! That's why the Apostle Paul stated clearly, "Anyone unwilling to work should not eat" (2 Thes. 3:10). But in reality, the amount of money and wealth which we receive is determined by God. According to His divine will and knowledge, He entrusts to each of us the amounts which He knows will be best for us.

What should be our reaction to our financial state? Some might pray, "Dear Lord, you must have made a mistake concerning me and my finances. Please give me more money." Others might try to circumvent God's design for their lives by trying to win the lottery or to obtain large sums of money through some other means. Mature Christians, however, will realize God's infinite

wisdom far surpasses their limited perspective. They will accept with a thankful spirit what God has entrusted to them and seek to honor God by their living and by their giving.

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.

The Lutheran Course on Marriage

Love *The Lutheran Course*?

Then take *The Lutheran Course on Marriage*!

Building on the success of *The Lutheran Course*, *The Lutheran Course on Marriage* takes you through a 7-session on marriage enrichment. Each session features a DVD presentation, which is followed by a group discussion that works through the topic with depth and humor.

Great for couples of all ages and stages of marriage!

It's Lambing Season!

Thank you to all who contributed to the Heifer Project during January, February and March. As of this writing we purchased eight flocks of geese, one flock of ducks and two flocks of chicks.

For the months of April and May, we will collect for a "New Beginning Basket" (\$120). A deserving family will receive a lamb. Sheep provide valuable wool and are a vital source of income in impoverished communities.

Help us create a new beginning for someone by picking up an ark and collecting your spare change. It's amazing how all those coins can add up, even if everyone only dropped a few coins in the piggy bank in the Narthex!

Drop off your filled ark in the church office at any time. If you want know how much you contributed, put your name on a piece of paper and put it in the ark.

Mid-Season eScrip Sign Ups

Register your VonsClub, and credit and debit cards now either online by visiting www.escrip.com or with Heidi Kracy. You will be helping the Youth Group with their fund-raising AND you won't have to turn in your Vons receipts next summer. All your "Back-to-School" purchases will be automatically calculated and donated to the Bethlehem Youth Group. It couldn't be easier!

Thanks to your support last fall, the Escrip earnings have really multiplied! If you have already registered your cards, you are set and ready to keep contributing! If you have not registered your cards, consider doing so before the end of May.

Thanks to All Who Provided Our Wonderful Lenten Dramas

J. R. Anderson
Pastor Will
Vanessa Stevenson
Bruce Gustafson
Robert Redford
Candie Toth
Bob Campbell

Ron Clausen
Christina Watson
Dale Retrum
David Retrum
Ernie Mazzari
Richard Toth
Brian Gary

Join us!
Vacation Bible School
July 28 - August 1
9 a.m. to noon



**Wild
Kingdom!**

*Where the Son shines
on God's children!*

Plan to join us for an experience you will not find anywhere else! This Vacation Bible School is being written, planned and directed by two of our church members who have over **fifty!** combined years of teaching experience.

Children who have completed Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th grade this June are invited to join us as we explore God's creation from the grasslands, to the mountains, to the oceans.

Parents, Grandparents! Mark your calendars for this summer's VBS! The fee is \$10 per child. Because we don't want any child to miss out on this adventure, scholarships are available. Contact Shirley Campbell or Pastor Will.

We are looking for volunteers for all kinds of duties. Sign up on the Narthex bulletin board and/or talk to our VBS Director, Shirley Campbell.

Next Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, Apr. 9th
7:00 pm
Fireside Room

Parish Life

Important Dates:

New church directory - directory pictures to be taken from May 21 to May 24. Sign-up will be from mid-April. No cost to Bethlehem Lutheran Church or to you unless you would like to buy your portrait.

Paper Roller's "Thank You" Dinner - Please keep Sunday, June 1st available for the thank you dinner. We are thanking our Paper Rollers for 40 years of wonderful service to our church.

Hollywood Bowl - "The Gift o Music" is set for this years trip to the Hollywood Bowl. The date is July 19 to see Julie Andrews at the Bowl. Tickets are priced at \$30.00 each and this includes bus transportation. Tickets go on sale in early April. There are only 30 tickets, so sign-up early!

"Scramble" Golf Tournament in May

There will be a Bethlehem Golf Tournament will be on Saturday, May 17th, 2008, at the Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley. The tournament format will be a four-person team "scramble" where the best ball will be played by each team. The first tee time will be at 12:00 P.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 \$75 per person and will include green fees, golf cart and prize fund.

To secure our reservation we need to have everyone signed up and the money collected by Sunday, May 4th. There is 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.

Did you know that your donation to the Benevolence Account is distributed to different organizations?

Each dollar is given as 64¢ to the Pacifica Synod, 12¢ to Lutheran Social Services, 10¢ to support our missionaries and 14¢ to We Care of Los Alamitos. Thank you for your continued support.

Property Committee

The Property Committee is investigating changing the locks on all locking doors at the church. After 20+ years, many locks are worn and the key inventory is huge and obsolete. By changing the locks and issuing new keys, we'll have a new basis for controlling who has keys and what areas certain keys will access. This is particularly needed for community groups that use our facilities; limiting access helps with security and contains utility costs. We will keep the congregation apprised of when this changeover will occur (not yet determined) so keys can be exchanged.

Letting Your Light Shine

Three years ago Shirley and I took a long journey back to New York for my High School reunion. While in New York and Pennsylvania we saw many houses with a single electric candle in the front window. There was no signage to say what they represented. While in Pennsylvania we asked my cousin, who is a Lutheran pastor, about them. He explained that the candle was placed in the window to let other people know that Jesus Christ was welcome in that home. This seems to be Lutheran tradition. So, now, if you come by our house you will see an electric candle in the window.

This is another way that we as Christians can announce to world who we are and that we stand on our faith.

Matthew 5 :(14-16) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Fritz – Evangelism Committee

May, 2008 Newsletter Deadline

Monday, April 21st (3rd Monday of the month)
Please submit your articles by email or disc.

Golf Tournament Results

The latest Bethlehem Golf Tournament was a four-person team scramble held on March 8th at the Anaheim Hills Golf Course in Anaheim. Congratulations to the winning team of Eric Dobberteen, MaryLyn Dobberteen, John Rygh and Willie Ortega. The next Bethlehem Golf Tournament will be a four-person team scramble on Saturday, May 17th, 2008, at the Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley.

Bethlehem Men in Mission Meeting

Is there credible evidence that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Son of God? In a book titled "The Case for Christ," Lee Strobel, former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, retraces his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith by cross-examining a dozen experts with doctorates from schools like Cambridge, Princeton, and Brandeis who are recognized authorities in their own fields. Bethlehem Men-in-Mission will under-take a study of this book beginning in May. We meet the first and third Saturdays at 8:00 A.M. in the Fireside room. All men are welcome to join us for bible study, discussion and fellowship.

Men in Mission Support for Navajo Lutheran Mission

Each year the Bethlehem Men-In-Mission try to provide some mean of support for the Lutheran Navajo Mission in Arizona. 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 towels in the Narthex or we can accept donations so we can purchase towels on your behalf at Costco or Sam's. Last year our congregation responded with over 70 new towels. We need to have all towels collected by mid-April, 2008, so we can arrange to have them delivered to the reservation. If interested please contact a member of Men-in-Mission for more information.

Companion Hospice Care

Companion Hospice Care is now recruiting volunteers for our upcoming training program. Volunteers can become a needed friend to someone during the last part of their journey.

Volunteers can also relieve tired caregivers for short periods of time, or help with errands and shopping. Assignments will be in **your** geographical area. Become a member of our team, whose goal is to promote quality of life and comfort measures. Each applicant will receive 16 hours of orientation and training from our professional team.

Our training program will be held on Saturdays, April 26th, May 3rd, May 10th and May 17th, 2008. Conveniently located just off the 605 Freeway at 10330 Pioneer Blvd., Suite 210, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670. Call today and make a real difference in someone's life!

You may contact Deanna, Coordinator of Volunteers (562) 944-2711 for additional information. Ask about the new Home Study Course, or email at deanna@companionhospice.com.

The website is www.CompanionHospice.com.

Companion Hospice provides services in the following cities: Artesia, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Commerce, Compton, Covina, Cypress, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Habra, La Mirada, Lakewood, Lawndale, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Norwalk, Palos Verdes Peninsula, Paramount, Redondo Beach, Rossmoor, San Pedro, Santa Fe Springs, Seal Beach, Signal Hill, Sunset Beach, Torrance, West Covina, Wilmington.



submitted by JIM BRADON

April Birthdays

4/ 1	Maria Sakowski
4/ 2	Ken Johnson
4/ 3	Caryl Harris
4/ 6	Caroline Clausen Cathy Warnock
4/ 8	Marjorie Chapman Marv Schneider
4/ 9	Cameron Bonwit
4/10	Bruce Johnson Katherine Lindell Marynell Wolfe
4/12	John Buezis Caitlin Johnson
4/13	Dwight Boyles
4/17	Ruth Bennett Geoff Kracy
4/18	Donald Ochampaugh
4/19	Erika Gary
4/21	Madison Hoglund
4/22	Irene Johnson
4/23	Velomy Kizanis
4/26	Cheri Dobberteen
4/30	Virginia Robinson Melissa Sandvig

April Anniversaries



4/1/1989	Richard & Candie Toth
4/8/2006	Dan & Andrea O'Gara
4/11/1987	Ken & Debbie Johnson
4/11/1993	Robert & Julie Davis
4/14/2007	David & Krissy Retrum
4/17/1945	Jack & Ruth Bennett
4/18/1975	Marv & Susan Schneider
4/24/1976	Lon & Cathy Warnock
4/30/1971	David & Jeanne Sandvig

Please Remember in Prayer Members and Friends of the Congregation:

Undergoing treatment:

Gladyce Ackerman
 Adeline Beemer (Lynn Roesner's mother) - lymphoma
 Joan Bissing (friend of Charlotte Driskill) - cancer
 Joe & Barbara Bull (friends of MarySeibert)
 Julie Davis - rheumatoid arthritis
 Sara DeWeese - cancer
 Laura Duke (friend of Charlotte Driskill)
 Katrina Gary
 Helen & Yzette (friends of Jim Brandon)
 Lenora Jones (friend of Lynne Estabrook)
 Jack Lyons
 Jim Mauritz (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 Rekestad - 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
 Ruth Bennett
 Erik Bonwit
 Sigrun Borneo
 Joyce Burger
 Marjorie Chapman - hip surgery
 Lynne Estabrook
 Joshua Gimbel (Betty Jacobs' great-grandson)
 Stuart Gordon (brother-in-law of Sigrun Borneo)
 Pat Greene (Carol Snyder's cousin) - cancer
 Betty Jacobs
 Genevieve Jenkins
 Turid Larson (Fritz & Shirley Campbell's cousin)
 Katherine Lindell
 Charlie Lyons
 Kristine Parkinson (the Lindell's daughter) - pancreatitis
 Jackie Philips (Ron Clausen's sister) - multiple sclerosis
 Robert Redford - radiculopathy
 Virginia Robinson
 Mary Seibert
 Katherine Zeller (Nina Van Tress' sister)

Convalescent or Care Facility:

Jeanette Olmstead Ruth Precker
 Jean Rich Jeff Thompson

Military in Harm's Way:

Evan Jones (Cathy Warnock's nephew) - in Iraq
 Matt Purtell (Krissy Retrum's cousin) - in Iraq
 Chris Rogers - in Iraq
 Chad Schweam (friend of Joen Coleman) - 3rd tour in Iraq