

Christ Lutheran Church Connected

December 2009

FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN, TO US A SON
IS GIVEN, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE
ON HIS SHOULDERS. AND HE WILL BE
CALLED WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER,

Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6

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CLC Connected

The monthly newsletter of
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Sunday Worship Schedule

8:00AM Traditional Services
9:30 AM Blended Worship
11:00 AM Informal Worship

Thoughts from Pastor Joe

This being December and all, Pastor Mike and I want to give you a gift. But you can't open it until after Christmas. I hope you'll like it, and use it, because we've thought long and hard about what the best gift we could give you might be. And then we agreed: We want to give you a chance to spend time with us in regular Bible study, which we will lead on Wednesday evenings.

I know, I know. You were hoping for a Wii, or an iphone, or maybe a gift certificate of some kind. Sorry if you're disappointed. Then again, when God promised the world a savior, and people looked at Jesus, at least some of them probably thought, "That's it? That's the big deal? A baby – complete with the sour smell of spit-up and a full diaper? God couldn't do any better than that?" But in fact that was God's best gift to the world, a gift he had promised in his word thousands of years before.

So, Pastor Mike and I really think that time spent in God's word is the best gift we could share with you. It makes hearts new, it helps us understand our world and our lives from God's perspective, it gives us what we need to "no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching..." (Ephesians 4:14). Not only is it a great gift, it is also my Christmas wish...that anyone and everyone who is not already a part of a Bible study would be willing to set some time aside to join us on Wednesday nights.

This is how it will work: Beginning the Sunday after Christmas Pastor Mike and I will walk through the Gospel of Mark with you in the Sunday morning message. Each week we'll take a consecutive chapter of Mark's story of Jesus, which will take us all the way through until Easter. But, of course, a twenty minute sermon is not enough time to delve completely into any of the chapters, so on the following Wednesday night we will do "the director's cut". In other words, we'll unpack more carefully and thoroughly the chapter from the Sunday before. The person who preached on Sunday will do the Bible study the following Wednesday. We will follow our Children's ministry midweek schedule.

Here's what we need from you to make this gift work – please let us know on the patio the time on Wednesday that would work best for you. If we meet at 6:00, would you be able to participate? How about 7:00? Either one works for you? Please let us know so we can schedule accordingly.

Hope you like our gift. It's given with love.

Pastor Joe



Advent

An excerpt from an article
by Dennis Bratcher

Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out from their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance!

It is that hope, however faint at times, and that God, however distant He sometimes seems, which brings to the world the anticipation of a King who will rule with truth and justice and righteousness over His people and in His creation. It is that hope that once anticipated, and now anticipates anew, the reign of an Anointed One, a Messiah, who will bring peace and justice and righteousness to the world.

Part of the expectation also anticipates a judgment on sin and a calling of the world to accountability before God. We long for God to come and set the world right! Yet, as the prophet Amos warned, the expectation of a coming judgment at the "Day of the Lord" may not be the day of light that we might want, because the penetrating light of God's judgment on sin will shine just as brightly on God's people. Because of this important truth, especially in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Season of Advent has been a time of fasting and penitence for sins similar to the Season of Lent. However, a different emphasis for the season of Advent has gradually unfolded in much of the rest of the church. The season of Advent has come to be celebrated more in terms of expectation or anticipation. Yet, the anticipation of the Coming of the Messiah throughout the Old Testament and Judaism was not in connection with remembrance of sins. Rather, it was in the context of oppression and injustice, the longing for redemption, not from personal guilt and sin but from the systemic evil of the world expressed in evil empires and tyrants. It is in that sense that all creation groans for its redemption as we witness the evil that so dominates our world (Rom 8:18-25).

Of course, there is the problem of longing for vindication from an evil world when we are contributors to that evil. This is the power of the images of Amos when he warns about longing for the "Day of the Lord" that will really be a day of darkness (Amos 5:18-20). Still, even with Amos' warning the time of Advent is one of expectation and anticipation, a longing for God's actions to restore all things and vindicate the righteous. This is why during Advent we as Christians also anticipate the Second Coming as a twin theme of the season. So, while some church traditions focus on penitence during Advent, and there remains a place for that, the spirit of that expectation from the Old Testament is better captured with a joyous sense of expectancy. Rather than a time of mourning and fasting, Advent is celebrated as a time of joy and happiness as we await the coming of the King. Advent is a time of preparation that is marked by prayer. While Lent is characterized by fasting and a spirit of penitence, Advent's prayers are prayers of humble devotion and commitment, prayers of submission, prayers for deliverance, prayers from those walking in darkness who are awaiting and anticipating a great light (Isa 9)!

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

One of the ways a lot of people prepare for Christmas is to break out their favorite Christmas carols. Humming those familiar tunes kind of gets us in the mood to celebrate the birth of our Savior. And a lot of carols have great, meaningful lyrics. For the four Sundays of Advent, Pastor Joe and Pastor Mike will focus on Songs for Christmas. Each sermon will use as its starting point a familiar song, tied to scripture. Then we'll get to sing it together. Join us for Advent beginning November 29.



From Pastor Mike

For a long time I have been feeling that there is something not working about how we talk about Jesus. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with how we view Jesus, it is something wrong with how we communicate the need for Jesus. The classic view is let people know how messed up they are. As Nicky Gumbel once said when trying to evangelize the woman who would become his wife, “you look awful, you need Jesus.” She still married him.

The problem with this approach is that People don’t recognize that there is anything wrong with them anymore. For the last thirty years, we have been teaching them that no matter what they did, they are ok. Instead of a broken world, people think, “no it’s not wrong, it is just different.”

I ran across this article by Scot McKnight in Leadership Journal and it really helped crystallize my thinking on the subject. This part really helps summarize the issue: *“For a person to feel guilty, that person must have a sense of morality. But morality requires a potent sense of what is right and wrong, and it needs a powerful sense of what is true and false. Contemporary culture does not provide the average iGen with a profound grasp of what is right and wrong apart from the conviction that assaulting the self is clearly wrong.”* Full article available at (<http://tinyurl.com/ot6cuz>)

The profound part of this generational shift in thinking is the idea that people like Jesus, and *they think that they compare pretty well to him*. There are significant problems with that statement, but it does open the door for us to talk about Jesus. He is part of the modern pantheon of figures that people like. The issue for us is to figure out how to get people to understand that they need him in a way that isn’t just another self-help guru.

Our challenge is to be like Paul in Athens (Acts 17) where he wanders around the city observing what people valued. From there, he was able to communicate with them what Jesus had for them. We are not here to say the current culture is good or bad. In a way, that is irrelevant to us. Our question is, how do we reach different people for Jesus?

The other challenge is that we don’t fall prey to the same thinking. When everyone talks about the spirit within and the power of positive thinking, it is easy to fall into the same trap. We must always remember who we are, why we need God.

-Pastor Mike



Christmas Eve

Worship Celebrations

Worship with us!

4:00 PM Family Worship

Music and Drama

Featuring music by "Messenger"

5:30 PM Family Worship

Music and Drama

Featuring music by combined Children's Choirs

7:30 & 11:00 PM Candlelight Service

Featuring music by the Chancel Choir as well as other vocalists and instrumental ensemble*

*NOTE: There will be 20 minutes of beautiful Christmas music provided by the instrumental ensemble prior to both services, beginning at 7:10 and 10:40.

Come early and enjoy the music!

LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH (AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME)

Those words are from an old song that's been a favorite of mine since I first sang it in children's choir at church. I hadn't thought of this song for a long time, but for some reason it popped into my head the other day. Over the years, many people have recorded it, but my favorite version is by Mahalia Jackson, who sang it during the difficult days of the Civil Rights Movement when peaceful demonstrators were being beaten and threatened. Through the magic of YouTube, I was able to watch a grainy video of her singing that song and I couldn't help but feel the Holy Spirit coming through her powerful voice, singing "... with God as our father, brothers all are we..."

Listening to Mahalia again gave me the idea for the theme of this month's newsletter. At Christmas, we hear a lot about "Peace On Earth". But in these troubled times, I believe it's so important to look at what each of us can do to bring peace to our homes, our church, and our community.

Why is this so important? Well, I am writing this the day after the shootings at Fort Hood. While reading about this tragedy, I read this from a blogger who was on the scene:

"In the saturation coverage right after the events, the "expert" talking heads are compelled to offer theories about the causes and consequences. In the following days and weeks, newspapers and magazines will have their theories too. Looking back, we can see that all such efforts are futile. The shootings never mean anything. Forty years later, what did the Charles Whitman massacre "mean"? A decade later, do we "know" anything about Columbine? Some people go crazy. ***There is chaos and evil in life.***" (emphasis added)

As Christians, we might ask what we can do to combat that chaos and evil? (Well, besides praying). If we're honest with ourselves, we can admit that, at this time of year, the stresses we face can often make us a little short-tempered. Maybe we're more likely to snap at a salesclerk. We might rationalize cutting in front of another driver to save a few minutes, because we're so busy. But, as Christians, aren't we supposed to resist falling into that trap? Why not try to focus on keeping a calm, generous spirit in our hearts this year? It might even be contagious!

Now, that's not to say that I'm suggesting that we all go out and get everyone to hold hands and sing Kumbaya – far from it. Many times peace can only be attained by speaking the truth. Several years ago I was in a restaurant when a father yelled at the top of his lungs at his little son. Everyone was uncomfortable, but we all stayed in our seats. One courageous man stood up, walked to the table and calmly told the father that he objected to the way he'd treated the child. The father angrily told the man that it wasn't any of his business. This man replied that it WAS his business, he was affected just by hearing it. The father grumbled but had no comeback. When the man left, the people in the restaurant clapped for him, for his willingness to stand up and say what we all were thinking.

Can we find that kind of courage this Christmas season? Would we be able to lovingly correct a friend or family member if he says something out of line? Would we be willing to be the one to tell a friend or co-worker that she shouldn't be driving and ask for her car keys? Could we commit to letting go of the unreasonable expectations we feel others have for us? What would happen if we didn't send out our Christmas cards early? Or if the stores were sold out of the video game our nephew asked for? Or if our decorations weren't the most spectacular on the block? Maybe we would accept that we're human and imperfect, and that's the reason that God sent his Son to us in the first place.

In this issue, we feature articles about opportunities to give back what we've been given—through our Giving Garland and the work of the SCV Emergency Winter Shelter; the importance of communication and finding peace of mind during stressful times; the exciting plans for a new bible study led by Pastor Joe and Pastor Mike and plans to take our VBS program outside our walls to our neighbors next summer.

As we look forward to the Advent and Christmas seasons, let us pause and reflect on how we can reflect God's peace and love. As the song says:

TO TAKE EACH MOMENT AND LIVE EACH MOMENT IN PEACE ETERNALLY. LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME.



The Scoop from Pastor Dan

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

I am returning to the work of writing a monthly newsletter article. I will be writing from the heart addressing issues of faith from the perspective of my hospital times. These are my personal experiences of God in the adventure of seeing and experiencing God. My faith is my faith and isn't meant to judge or measure any others' faith. My prayer is that my writing will honor God and speak to your heart the truth of God's love.

I have for all of my adult life believed faith to be a dynamic, passionate, committed relationship with Jesus Christ. And because of the life and death of Jesus a relationship with God is made possible.

I have also come to believe that God is deeply involved with/in control of His faithful and He can be trusted. We are in His hands and He is gracious and good. Plans to prosper us even with the twists and turns of life is His chief concern that we might worship and love Him.

Matt Redman has put it well for me in his musical recounting of Psalm 23:

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
Your perfect love is casting out fear**

**And even when I'm caught in the middle of the storms of this life
I won't turn back
I know You are near**

**And I will fear no evil
For my God is with me
And if my God is with me
Whom then shall I fear?
Whom then shall I fear?**

Chorus:

**Oh no, You never let go
Through the calm and through the storm
Oh no, You never let go
In every high and every low
Oh no, You never let go
Lord, You never let go of me**

**And I can see a light that is coming for the heart that holds on
A glorious light beyond all compare
And there will be an end to these troubles
But until that day comes
We'll live to know You here on the earth**

God is amazing and His grace is beyond our ability to understand. We respond with love and faith and obedience to His living Word and we know we can rest in His care and we are assured that we are right where we belong. This is not easy stuff. But God will move heaven and earth to show us His love.

Giving Back through the Giving Garland



Once again, this Christmas season, we will have the opportunity to be a blessing to our neighbors, both near and far. The Giving Garland is not just a way to reach out to others in need, but it allows us to give in honor and celebration of our Savior's birth. You can help by selecting a tag from the garland, purchasing the requested item and returning by the date indicated on the tag. Some tags will ask you to provide your name and telephone number, if so, please complete and place in the gift box located in the narthex. Please remember to attach your tag to the gift you return as it will help in sorting and distribution. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please contact Debbie Price at 259-0200 or deb-bie@come2christ.com.

These are the organizations that we will be supporting this year, along with a brief description of each:

The Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services

The LA County Dept. of Children & Family services was founded in 1984 as the public agency charged with establishing and managing a system of support services for families and children of all ages and backgrounds. Social workers have identified needy children that will receive our gifts.

Lutheran Social Services

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California celebrates the love of Christ for all people through acts of service. Their mission is that all people will have the opportunity to live and work in a safe community with dignity and hope. Gifts are distributed to families in need by LSS.

Penny Lane

Penny Lane provides housing, residential treatment, foster care, adoption services, an on-site education school, and outpatient health services to emancipated foster youth. This organization serves thousands of children, youth and families each year.

Project Angel Tree

Project Angel Tree provides Christmas presents to children of incarcerated individuals on behalf of and in the name of the parent. These children all live in the Santa Clarita Valley. The gifts are hand delivered to the children and the message of God's awesome love for us

Giving Garland, cont'd

through His Son, Jesus Christ, is shared with each child. Millions of children across the country have been touched through this program since its inception in 1982.

Senior Center

The SCV Senior Center is a multipurpose center dedicated to providing independence, dignity and quality of life for our senior citizens and the community at large. The requested gift cards will assist seniors that need supplemental income for basic necessities.

Bags 4 Kids

Bags 4 Kids is an organization that works with police stations, social workers and foster homes when a child has been removed from their unsafe home. Many of these children must face this crisis and frightening transition alone. All bags provide comfort to a child who can't help feeling alone and scared in a very terrifying situation. It also provides them with something to call their own when, sadly, the majority have nothing at all.

Any Soldier Project

The Any Soldier project is a program that we currently participate in to send care packages and letters of support to our military personnel serving our country overseas. We will continue to support our soldiers by sending them DVD's this Christmas Season.

Santa Clarita Valley Convalescent Home

The Santa Clarita Valley Convalescent Hospital is located in Newhall and has a ninety nine bed capacity. They serve primarily those with lower income and very little family, if any at all. For some, the thought of knowing that there are people who care for them may keep them warmer than the pajama bottoms that are being requested.

Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran World Relief works to end poverty and injustice by empowering some of the world's most impoverished communities to help themselves. LWR works with partners in 35 countries around the world. Each gift strengthens families, strengthens communities and supports LWR's life-changing mission to end hunger and poverty.

What You Should Know About the SCV Emergency Winter Shelter

As one of the fastest-growing communities in the United States, the Santa Clarita Valley is increasingly challenged to fund the social services required by its rapidly developing society. With public funds scarce for social programs, the Santa Clarita Community Development Corporation (SCCDC) has taken a primary role in meeting the needs of the hungry and homeless in this community.

The principal activity of the SCCDC is the operation of its Santa Clarita Emergency Winter Shelter (EWS). The EWS assists people with the help they need to improve their individual or family circumstances.

Open from approximately Dec.1 through March 15 each year, the EWS provides shelter, food, clothing, medical and mental services as well as other assistance and referrals to its clients.

Additionally, because minors are not permitted to stay at the EWS, qualifying local families with children receive shelter in a local motel through the SCCDC's voucher program.

The vision of the SCCDC is to create a continuum of care, focusing first on emergency services and then adding support services. Our case workers help people to regain their independence. The SCCDC has helped many people and families get back on their feet.

Jenny and her three children arrived in Santa Clarita from Georgia, homeless and having nowhere to go. Jenny was a victim of domestic violence and fled her abuser. She was given a transfer from her employer, so she had a job, but had no lodging.

The Emergency Winter Shelter was open and she arrived hopeful for an answer to her needs. There Jenny and her children were given a hot meal and temporary lodging in a nearby motel. She was also directed to daytime case management at Lutheran Social Services where bi-weekly case management and counseling took place.

Today, Jenny resides safely in her own home in Santa Clarita with her children, has hopes for a promotion at her workplace and has a new lease on life!

CLC will once again help provide food and fellowship at the shelter. Watch for more details about how you can help!

Hands and Hearts



With the help of many volunteers working together in a labor of love, Hands & Hearts sent 100 Christmas-themed Care Packages to our troops in November. The packages were filled with hand decorated wreaths, Barbara's pine cone Christmas trees, bright tinsel garland, fuzzy red stockings, wooden nutcrackers, shiny metal ornaments and Sandi's camouflage Santa Hats.

Home-made Christmas cards were written by our 7th graders while on retreat and by youth from the 1st Presbyterian church. Our KOK children and students at Wiley Canyon Elementary contributed their precious art treasures and each soldier received at least one hand written letter from a member of our congregation. A camping club in West L.A. donated knitted and crocheted scarves and an abundance of the long-awaited Halloween candy was tucked into the boxes.

As beautiful and heartwarming as each Care Package was, one stood out from the rest, for among the boxes of this shipment was our 4000th Care Package. Ann Dodson is the volunteer whose name was chosen for the honor of packing this milestone box.

Ann's daughter, Maryann and her husband, Chris Fernandez are members of CLC. Ann attended Granddaughter Reagan's baptism in the old sanctuary and came to church whenever she was in town to visit. Now that Ann has relocated from Delaware to Santa Clarita, we are blessed to have her at Christ Lutheran on a regular basis and at Hands and Hearts, where she attends with her new Grandbaby, Scarlett, in tow.

The air at our packing party that night was filled with excitement, love and the joy that Christmas brings to our hearts. Our 4000th box was sent on its journey to Navy Lieutenant Kimberly Phair. Currently stationed aboard the USS Nimitz in the Persian Gulf, Lt Phair serves as a nuclear officer on the Nimitz, the lead ship in its class of super-carriers.

We chose to honor Lt Phair with the 4,000th package for several reasons. We've not honored an officer with our previous milestone boxes, nor have we recognized a woman. It is certainly appropriate to acknowledge a member of the United States Navy, as well.

Lt. Kimberly Phair visited CLC in 2005 to attend the baptism of her niece, Aurora and on Veterans' Day, 2007 for the baptism of her nephew, Maxton. Kimberly's sister, Lara Henderson, along with her husband, Scott, have been members at CLC since 2005.

As we here at home prepare for the celebration of our Savior's birth, let us remember in prayer those who serve so far away from loved ones and friends. At Hands and Hearts we will continue to make our soldiers feel special and let them know we remember them and support them, long after the Christmas holiday is past.

This month we turn our attention to our Winter Wonderland. Homemade snowmen and handmade snowflakes will adorn December's Care Packages. Hand warmers will help keep the brutal winter cold from freezing their fingers and toes. We are requesting

Hands and Hearts, cont'd

donations of soup to warm their tummies and nourish their bodies. We are also searching for snowmen to send to the troops.

We hope some folks might be willing to donate your gently used holiday decorations, lights, wrapping paper, ribbon or cards to be used for next year's Christmas Care Packages. When you're shopping at those half-price after - Christmas sales, please remember the troops. It is your individual donations that enable us to reach out, halfway around the world to the men and women of our armed forces who serve on our behalf.

Please come and join us, either by providing a donation for the month, prayer or a letter for a soldier or by attending one of our monthly packing parties. In December we will be packing in the Fellowship Center on Tuesday, the 15th from 7 to 8 p.m. and on Wednesday the 16th from 9 to 11 a.m. All are welcome; children, teens and adults. There is something for everyone to do.

If you cannot attend but would still like to be a part of the Hands & Hearts ministry, please contact Karolle at 255-3222 or e-mail us at hands_n_hearts@yahoo.com.

It has been such an honor and privilege for me to be a part of such a great ministry. I encourage all to come.

God Bless-

Tee
Hands & Hearts

Thank You For Your Care

We just came from the doctor and I have great news! I am "cancer-free"! My blood tests and such all show healthy results. My next appointment is in three months! Yahoo! It has been quite the "deal" since I found out last January and now it is over!

And, I must say, I don't think I could have done it without you. I so appreciate the hospital visits, the flowers, the notes and the books. When I got home, you still visited with lunches & dinners; cards and phone calls. I just didn't feel alone. You kept my spirits up! Your prayers really did wonders for me!

I thank each of you for every little thing you did for me. I thank God for my church family!

Holly Holland

The Race is On

Patti Handy
Money Coach



It's 2:00 am and it's starting. The mind madness. You awaken for no good reason and suddenly the brain goes on overdrive. Every item on your to-do list, all the worries of the world and the health of your loved ones, seem to race at lightening speed through every cell. "My gosh, please stop, I just need to sleep," you say to yourself as you try to reason with your brain. Why is it that these issues always seem worse at night? There must be some scientific reason for it.

If it makes you feel better, you aren't alone. In fact, it may even bring a smile if you think about the thousands of others laying with you, at the exact same time, contemplating the similar issues. Ahh, life.

I'm not a psychologist and I don't claim to have the magical answer to this dilemma. I, too, struggle with the mind madness game. But, I can tell you what helps me. Faith and control. I know what you're going to say..."But if you have faith, you realize you aren't in control."

So, what am I getting at? Rather than panic and get caught up in the media crazed doom and gloom, I suggest you step back, take a breath, and realize there is much that you can do to take control of your life. Take each item that you feel challenged by and break it into smaller pieces. Take small steps towards the resolution to your problem.

Here's an example. Let's say you or your spouse just lost a job. It's scary, no doubt. But, if you get caught in the panic and fear, you can't be productive in moving forward. Whether it's looking for a new job or venturing out into the world of entrepreneurship, your mind needs to be open, clear and panic free. This mindset doesn't always come easily, I'll give you that. But, being proactive vs. reactive puts you in a place of empowerment and strength, rather than that of a victim.

Another example would be money issues. In this economic climate, many have watched their 401K dwindle, credit card debt increase or cash flow tighten. Again, no doubt, this can be a scary time. I'm not suggesting you put your head in the sand and "imagine all is well." I'm suggesting you step back and look at what you can do to make things different. Are there spending habits that can change? Can you forgo dinner out for now? Can you come up with clever ways to bring in additional income?

Let's even turn this around and make it an opportunity for growth. Personally, I think this is a great opportunity to teach our kids the importance of managing, respecting and saving money. What better time to show them what happens if they don't learn to manage their money. Teach them the importance of staying out of credit card debt, having a savings account in place and creating healthy lifestyle choices.

This seems to come full circle, as much of our mind madness at 2:00 am, comes from our worry for our kids and their future. We want them healthy, happy and at peace. Part of that peace is knowing they can take care of themselves financially when they enter the world on their own. Be proactive and teach them, guide them and give them the gift of money smarts.

Money Coach and published author, Patti Handy, received her Bachelor's degree in Accounting, followed by a combined twenty-five years in the banking and mortgage arena and is a member of CLC

Justice and Communication

Dr. John Dominic Crossan is a theologian and Biblical scholar who specializes in the historical study of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. He has published numerous books on these subjects and is a favorite speaker as part of the Jesus Study Group.

Dr. Crossan talks about two ways to peace: One is to use force to overpower, then moving to enforced peace. The alternative, the non-violent path to peace, is through justice. It's a challenging and helpful differentiation.

In this busy and intense environment, it's easy to use communication as primarily a data exchange: what's the information to be ingested or given, what are the most effective ways to exchange that information, and how can we use it to move ahead. But too often that approach is just a series of monologues at best, of data spewed out.

How different it can be when instead, communication is about sharing hearts, feelings, concerns, dreams and possibilities. Then the information exchange is to find ways to link together, to join energy, to move into a future together. That implies core values of justice, of interdependence, of honor and respect. That doesn't always mean easy conversations; in fact one part of a commitment to justice is to naming where it is absent, and in being open to hearing how each of us is keeping it from being fully realized.

Our communication takes many forms and serves many purposes. But Crossan challenges us to use communication as a means to promote peace, to share God's love, to invite justice. It's not about being subservient to the other, but about being willing to speak truth as well, though from a place of invitation and relationship. It means listening fully, and inviting and expecting the same. It's not about just getting points across, it's about how perspectives might be shared and heard.

Love and justice. A tough and holy path to peace. May God be with us as we move together on this path with imagination, integrity, sensitivity and purpose.

David Anderson
Staff Administrator at University United Church of Christ in Seattle.
(article reprinted by permission)



Council Corner



Our November Church Council meeting began with prayer and the sharing of what “God has been doing in our lives.” Then Pastor Mike led our Bible study time. We used Psalm 51: verses 1 – 12 as a prayer. We each read a verse and then prayed about that verse and asked for any prayers relating to that verse. I like that the council begins each meeting with some kind of Bible study. It is a time to think, renew, and reflect.

This is a busy time of year for everyone. Your Church Council is also very busy at this time working on the 2010 budget and planning for the congregational meeting. We need to reduce our budget, and this is not an easy task. We still need to take into consideration the economic uncertainty that we all continue to face. Our giving was up in October which is a positive sign. We looked at several versions of the budget and discussed at length each one. We will come back to this one more time in December, and then the budget will be published for review before the annual meeting on January 31st.

We wish God’s blessings to all of you during this Advent season as we prepare for and wait for the birth of our Savior.

Peace be with you,

Lisa Kennedy

On Sunday, December 13, at 12:15, there will be an informational meeting regarding Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ (LCMC). At the Annual Congregational Meeting in January, the council will be asking the congregation to vote on joining this organization.

Abundant Life Senior Fest Workshop at CLU

A special workshop, “Senior Fest: Passing on the Faith” will be held at California Lutheran University on Thursday, January 14th, 2010, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Dr. Roland Martinson, noted author and Lutheran Seminary professor, will be the keynote speaker as he addresses the well-being of our physical, spiritual, social, and intellectual lives. For persons age 50 and over, this is a fine opportunity for learning, inspiration, and fellowship.

The registration fee covering the full cost of the workshop (including lunch) is \$25. It will be \$30 after January 5th. Please pick up a registration form and more information on the patio, or email Liz Kebschull at kebschulls@att.net asking that these be emailed to you. Please let her know if you are able to drive and how many other passengers you might be able to take.

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study



Our studies in December will focus on Matthew's gospel. We'll discover what a difference it makes that Jesus "is it" - the long-awaited Messiah and fulfillment of God's promises. We will reflect on the messages of the prophets in Old Testament times and how these messages point to the coming of the Christ child that first Christmas morning. We will spend time preparing our hearts for celebrating the true meaning of Christmas and sharing the message of Christ's birth with those longing for meaning in their lives.

Plan to join us. We meet each Sunday morning at 9:30am in Rooms 12/13 in the Education Center. Study Bibles and study guides are provided. Each week we complete the lesson based on the assigned text. This way we are "all on the same page" each time we attend. Plan to join us. Coffee is served (well at least it's brewed and available; we'll let you pour your own coffee!) See you next Sunday.

Men's Breakfast

Be sure to attend our December 5th Men's Breakfast when our special guest speaker will be Bishop Curtis "Earthquake" Kelley.

Earthquake Kelley, professional boxer and Hollywood pastor author of *Heaven's Golden Vessel*, shares his amazing story of seeing Heaven after a Brain Aneurysm.

"This is an exhilarating story about Heaven. As I read Bishop Earthquake's account, I was transported to Heaven with him. I walked with him as he saw Heaven for the first time, I stood with him by the crystal river as he talked to his murdered son, and I listened with him as the Lord spoke and gave him a word for this generation. I cried, laughed and repented by the end of the book. I look forward to seeing my loved ones again with greater anticipation after reading this book. Bishop Earthquake, on behalf of this generation, thank you for bringing this word from Heaven," said Dr. Jessica Davis, publisher of Word Harvest Books.

We meet Saturday December 5th starting at 7:30am at Marie Callender's Restaurant. Cost is \$12 payable at the door and includes a buffet breakfast. Please join us and invite a friend or neighbor to hear this interesting Christian speaker. If you have questions please contact mensbreakfast@come2christ.com.



Welcome New Members!



Jason and Elizabeth Abrahamson



David and Patty Chao **Krystal (Ibarra), Kevin, Daniel, Kelsey**



Hal and Lisa Goldstein **Joseph (Beltran), Will**



Phil Graybill and Sara Rinehart **Keely**



Tina and Reed **Jacobi James**



Brian and Amber Mueller

[Not pictured: **Charles and Joyce Johnston Katie** - New members' names are indicated in bold]



Jeanne and Ted Papenthein Mary, Teddy, Tommy



Tom and Doni Payne Monica, Kenny



Randy and Kathleen Sharp Drew, Austin, Brooke



Michael and Laura Strunk Chelsea (Kitaguchi), Owen



Steve and Marcia Tannehill Kyle, Megan, Sean



Kristine Whitson Whitney (Heyward), Aaron (Hedwall)

With great appreciation, I'd like to thank: the Swartz family, the Koch family, the Smoak family, Hank Klehn, Russ Laibl, Rich Hall, Kathleen Kahovec, Jessica Newby, Barbie Campeau, Charlotte Burruso, Debbie Price, Judy Barnes, Karen Nelson, Lori Marshall, Bret Wims, Doug Wuerl, Lynne Rieck, Steve Andersen, Sydney Herbert, Felicity Grover, Teri Gaudio, Cindi Mathewson, Karolle Blackson, Megan Town, Mark Shreckengast, and our wonderful childcare team, Debi and Kayla Colbert and Kelsey Gabriel. Sharing your time and talents made this Basics of Faith class feel welcomed and connected... I couldn't have done it without you!

*With a grateful heart,
Robin Hyland*

Make A Difference Day

As this day of “doing good” continues to grow in our community, it also grows in our congregation. This year we were able to take on three projects with over 60 people coming out to help. We had two teams at the SCV Senior Center making place mats and crafts for their Home-Delivered Meal recipients along with a team that painted and fixed their Supportive Services building. The third team was at Cedarcreek Elementary School and painted doors and railings. It was an extremely productive day and I can’t think of a better way to spend a Saturday than being out in our community and sharing God’s love with others. Thank you to all who turned out and I look forward to this being an even bigger event next year.



Youth News

Stuff that is going on that you should know about:

- **Impact**
 - ◇ Dec 1, 8, 15 (Christmas Party on the 15th)
 - ◇ No Impact – Dec 22, 29
 - ◇ Starts again January 5, 2010
- **Sunday Morning bible study**
 - ◇ December 6,13,20
 - ◇ No Sunday Morning Bible Study December 27
 - ◇ Starts again January 3, 2010
- Guy's bible study: Monday, December 7 & 21
- The High School Mission trip is firming up and we will have an informational meeting on January 17th after the late service.
- Winter retreat: March 12-14.

Dont forget:

- We are on Facebook! Just look for the link from the church website. Check it out for the photos of our events and links to free music. You don't have to have a Facebook account to look.
- We send out *The Pulse* every week with details of what is coming up and discussion questions related to what we have been doing. Email PastorMike@Come2Christ.com to get on the list.
- We want you to have good, free, legal music downloads. Check out the Facebook page or The Pulse for the links.

Children's Ministries



December Schedule

Sunday School Christmas Program rehearsals in the sanctuary are on December 2, from 6 pm – 7:30 pm, and again on Saturday, December 5, from 9:00 am – 10:30 am.

Sunday School Christmas Program is Sunday, December 6 at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary. Come to the Fellowship Center afterwards for refreshments. Bring a plate of cookies to share.

Christmas Caroling and Refreshments on Wednesday, December 9, 6:30pm – 8:30pm. Meet at the church. Bring some Christmas cookies to share for refreshments after caroling.

No Sunday School on December 27

KOK and Youth Adventures and Confirmation are on break until January 6.

4th – 6th Grade Retreat at El Camino Pines is coming up February 5 – 7, 2010. Medical forms and payment of \$110 are due January 13. You don't want to miss this one! Friends are welcome to attend.

A big thank you to Linda Ferguson and the entire Youth Adventures team for a very successful Spaghetti Dinner. LOTS of families were served a delicious dinner with spaghetti, bread, salad, and dessert. Over \$1000 was raised to help pay for the retreat in February at El Camino Pines. Thank you to all who helped cook, serve, set up, clean up etc.

Children's choirs continue to meet throughout December from 5:15 – 6pm on December 2, 9, 16, and 23.

Junior High

Confirmation is on break for the season of Advent. We will meet again starting January 6.

Please join us for Christmas Caroling on Wednesday, December 9 at 6:30pm at the church. We will carol at the homes of three shut-ins from CLC and then come back to the Youth Center for refreshments. Please bring a plate of cookies to share.

9th Graders

It was a wonderful Confirmation Sunday on October 25. Thank you to all 29 students who worked so hard and made affirmation of your baptismal vows. It is a joy to watch you grow in the Lord. Thank you also for the wonderful cards and gifts that you gave me that day. I pray you had a special celebration of the day and that you will continue to grow in your faith and stay close to Jesus.

Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School 2010 Dates Set



We're hoisting the sails for VBS 2010 High Seas Expedition, where we'll dive into the book of Acts to hear God's Word. Preparations are well underway for two VBS weeks at CLC: June 14-18 and June 21-25. Our goal is to serve 800 children over the 2 weeks at CLC. **New to 2010, we'll reach beyond our shores here at CLC to venture into the community of Newhall for a 3-afternoon outreach program at Creekside Park, where we'll be bringing VBS to children who might not otherwise get to experience God in this way. We will need lots of volunteers for this outreach, please give serious thought to spending three afternoons bringing the fun and excitement of VBS to our community!**

Captain Jen Franco will steer the ship, and is already fishing for reliable deckhands to lead the age groups and the stations. Age group leaders are needed on board soon, as coordinating will begin this January. Please let Jen know as soon as possible if you want to join the leadership crew! (jenfranco_vbsclc@att.net or leave a message at the church office 259-0200.)

Anchors Away!



Sunday School Christmas Program will be Sunday, December 6 at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. Come and share in the joy of Jesus' birth with our program, "Glory to God in the Highest!"

Children ages 2 - 6th grade will be singing and performing in the play.

There will be a Happy Birthday Jesus party following the program. It will be in the Fellowship Center. Bring a plate of cookies to share.



Preschool News for December

We were excited to have such an overwhelming response to our pizza night with the preschool families. We had close to 225 people attending. We invited everyone to eat pizza with us before seeing The Perfect Gentlemen. The Perfect Gentlemen's show "One Hundred Years of Harmony" takes the listener on a musical and historical journey from the early 1900s to today. From barbershop to the blues and doo-wop to disco, everyone got a taste of many musical styles. We think that it is important to have occasions where we meet on a social level and nothing can be better than to enjoy great music and pizza together!!!!



*We would like to remind church members who are interested in having their child attend the preschool for the 2010 school year to call and arrange for a tour before the rush of the holidays. 259-0302.

Chris Porrazzo
Preschool Director



December Birthdays

1st

Robby Bovee
Jeanette Carlstrom
Jannelle Grover
Schuyler Olsen
Trevor Scott
Madison Wolpert

2nd

Patrick Apel
Tammy Gabriel
Stephanie Lee
Morgan Traina

3rd

Kelly Anderson
Rich Anderson
Matthew Deegan
Amy Miller
Nancy Myers

4th

Sandra Brookman
Gail Majjala

5th

Karen Bostwick
Nathan Hadden
Julie Kebschull
Gabriel Latkovich
Trevor Schrock
Jessica Vairo

6th

Amy Malbon
Joseph Pulaski

7th

Earl Bull
Floyd Cox
Donald Effertz
Brandon Surak
Cathy Sutherland

8th

Kathi Giddens
Betty Granger
Allana Keeler
Kurt Lorme

9th

Mark Cavarretta
Deborah Dole
Duncan Krumrine
Connie Marsden
Curt Meyer
Tom Payne

10th

Richard Granger
Rodd Hitch
Spencer Nelson
Morgan Shaner
Alex Skorniakoff
Laura Lathrop Warriner

11th

Jeanette Gorham
Brooke LeGassick
Eric Miller
Julie Morel
Donald Sielke

12th

Elizabeth Guzman
Joanne Metcalf

13th

Kaitlyn Cappelletty
Angus Ferguson
Melanie Fitzgibbons
Walter Gause

14th

Katalina Duenas
Michele Krantz
Sheri Maxwell
Jim Smith
Eric Weitzel

15th

Sue Bett
Tom Fellbaum
Herb Fulmer
Christina Miller
Ron Nolan
Bonnie Theberge

16th

Andrea Carstensen
Collin Curtin
Malcolm Edmiston
Adrian Jaureger
Christina Mendelson

17th

Pastor Joe Campeau
Melanie Meyer

18th

Ethan Franco
Adam Frandson
Michelle Frezieres
Eric Kniss
Thomas Lapp
Dane LeGassick
Kevin Rosenberger
Amanda Smith

19th

Christopher Smith
Erick Werner

20th

Ralph Blackson
Connor Gibson
Joseph Kellenberger
Heidi Metlen
Dawn Miller
Donna Nolan
Jill Sand

21st

Chris Connolly
Courtney Jones
Kimberly Myers

22nd

Lorraine Coleman
Rebecca Davis
Cole Tynon

23rd

Grace Daucher
Jakob Daucher
Dylan DeMuth
Stacy Friedler
Kevin Liddle
Sinthia Petote
Hannah Rosauer
Savannah Schutz

24th

Barbara Dyck
Bruce Krumrine
Maureen Wilcher

25th

Brooke Backes
Holly Estes
Fran Powanda
Edna Prokosch
Fran Rawlins
Nicole Stefani

26th

Taylor Cubas
Steve Flynn
Doni Payne
Margaret White

27th

Tyler Crowder
Ashlyn DeForest
Annamaria Lepisto
Eric Neasi
Leslie Nelson
Nevan Rodriguez
Diane Smith
Talitha Tumpal

28th

Brittany Asaro
Jessica Deegan
Rachel Hansmire
Steven Hoffman
Celia Hofmann
Dennis Neasi
Steve Tannehill

29th

Kelsey Chao
Kim Clayton
Deborah Estes
Elizabeth Kebschull
Adam Liddle

30th

Brad Eledge
Megan Flynn
Tom Harwood
Jonathan Papa
Dana Patton
Irene Petty
Betsey Schubert
Sonja Speer

31st

Erin Hall
Madelyn Johnson
Ashley Motschenbacher
Julie Musella



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