

# GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

January 2012



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil and Jeff Keane



"I thought it was gonna be a New Year?  
This looks just like the OLD year."

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## A BLESSED NEW YEAR

My prayer for you is to have a blessed and Christ-filled New Year!

As near as I can tell, this year is going to get interesting. That statement isn't based on prophetic insight as much as it comes from an article carried by New Scientist. It appears a Japanese laboratory has developed a method of making a picture of a person's thoughts.

Now, to be honest, I've often wanted such a device when I was teaching confirmation class or preaching a sermon. It would be great to know if my students were thinking about the end of class or if their church-going parents were meditating on the pot roast or the Sunday football kickoff while I was preaching.

In all honesty, the Japanese invention is not that advanced. Still, it is a breakthrough, a frightening breakthrough.

Frightening, because I don't want anyone knowing what I'm thinking or what I'm dreaming. Inside you and me there are things -- sinful things -- things that were never meant to be scrutinized or put on public display.

Still, according to Psalm 139, there is one person who does know us, both inside and out. Those verses say the Lord has searched us and known us. He knows what we're doing and what we're thinking. He knows all of our ways and words, even before we do.

Consider that. In spite of being fully aware of our twisted thinking and our sinful longings, the heavenly Father still loved us enough to send His Son into the world to win our salvation. Amazing!

In spite of knowing His persecutors, His betrayers, His deniers, and the end that awaited Him -- in spite of knowing each of us, Jesus spent His entire life doing all that was necessary so we might be redeemed, forgiven, and saved. This is why God's knowledge of me is not frightening. On the contrary, His knowledge and love assures me I will be safe and secure no matter what 2012 may bring.

Blessings,

*Pastor Dan*)

# New Year's Resolution Seen Through The Cross

I'll confess that I really don't know how the practice came into the lives of Christians, except through the comingling of the culture with the Church, but many of us will be making New Year's Resolutions this month. Of course, many of us will break them before February hits, but that's just the way these things go, right? We look at ourselves and decide we're too fat, too thin, too bald, too hairy, too rich, too poor, too weak, too strong, too pushy, too flimsy... whatever it is that catches our eye, and then "resolve" to make it better. Most of these things are not bad in themselves, but they often hide an insidious set of misunderstandings about who we are, and what we're supposed to be doing with our lives.

First off, we need to see that we're sinners. That's right—dirty, rotten, stinking, sinners. We're bad to the bone, so to speak, and helpless really to do much about it. Sure, in our pride, we want to think we can pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, but that's just a bunch of hooey. By ourselves, we're weak, and blind, and naked... not able to do much of anything. When the chips are down, we know we aren't strong enough to do much of the personal renovation we want to do, and instead, often do the things we hate. The Holy Spirit

enlivens that part of our conscience, so that we can see how badly we need grace, and that our baptismal lives only flow from one source: Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we need to realize that Christ doesn't call us to make "resolutions" about ourselves, but rather, to serve our neighbor in love, according to our duty and vocation. Most of those "resolutions" we like to engage in are entirely self-centered. We want all kinds of things that improve our lives, and often are content to walk all over our neighbor to do so. Christ, on the other hand, gave us Himself as a model of Christian virtue, allowing his neighbors to walk all over Him for their own good—He let the world crucify Him, so that His life might be poured out as a ransom for many. You and I live only by such grace, poured out through the Cross. If Jesus had been worried about His image and popularity, or how he could improve His ZIP code, get rock hard abs, run marathons, get promoted, or earn another degree, He would have been too worried about Himself to accomplish our salvation. Jesus saw us through the lens of the Cross, knowing exactly what we needed, and just what He needed to do to deliver us from sin, death and the devil. His "resolutions" were not about Himself, but

about fulfilling the Father's will, as it was shown through His neighbors of flesh and blood. And as always, He did all things well.

So this year, I'll challenge you to do something very counter-cultural: don't make any personal new year's resolutions. Heck, you and I both know, you're just gonna blow them, anyway. Instead, how about this: resolve to hear the Word of the Lord, and to receive His Sacraments, as He brings them to you. In that new life He offers you through those wondrous means of grace, resolve to serve your neighbor according to your duty, office and vocation. Resolve to hear the Word of God call mothers to be mothers, fathers to be fathers, children to be children, workers to be workers, pastors to be pastors... all of which find their meaning and purpose through the Cross-focused view of the neighbor. I know, it won't sell many books, and it won't necessarily sound good in your annual newsletter... but you just might find yourself walking ever more closely with the Lover of your soul. And I betcha you'll find that more enriching than another diet plan... Amen.

*Pastor Brad*

## Men's Breakfast / Bible Study January 21<sup>st</sup>

Join us **Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 am** for a delicious breakfast, wonderful fellowship, and in-depth Bible Study. We are going through the series "Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School." This month our topic is: "Genesis 34." *Pastor Dan*

# It's Music in God's Ears

On the Sixth Day of January we celebrate Epiphany, a Festival in which we remember the Adoration of the Magi. As they travelled from afar to offer gifts to the Infant Jesus, their tale reminds us that Jesus came not only for the Jewish descendants of Abraham, but for the salvation of every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.

This year we will be holding a special evening service and we hope that everyone can attend this special observance of Evening Prayer.

Those of you who have been attending our Advent Mid-Week Vesper Services will, no doubt, recognize some of the texts from those services in Evening Prayer. In fact, "Vespers" comes from the Latin for "Evening Prayer" just as "Matins" comes from the Latin for "Morning Prayer."

One of the Hymns in Vespers/Evening Prayer is a true gem in the history of our faith and I would like to introduce it to you: the *Phos Hilaron*.

Originally written in New Testament Greek, the *Phos Hilaron* (translation: Joyous Light) has the distinction of being the oldest hymn recorded outside of the bible that is still in use today. The hymn is first recorded by an unknown author in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which was written in the late 3rd or early 4th century AD. St. Basil the Great (329-379 AD) spoke of the singing of the *Phos Hilaron* as a cherished tradition of the church, the hymn being already considered old in his day.

This is one of the special benefits of our Ancient

Liturgies: we can sing words and melodies, knowing that we are joining our voices over the centuries with the generations of saints. Evening Prayer is full of these moments: *Phos Hilaron*, *Psalms*, *The Magnificat* (the song Mary sang when visited by the Angel Gabriel) and many others.

Truly, we hope that you will join us to celebrate this most ancient and special liturgy on Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00.

*And as a special note to any who may have difficulty travelling at night: please let the Church Office know – we would like to facilitate rides for anyone who can't drive at night so that as many people can attend as possible.*

Your Servant,  
*DVP (Denes Van Parvys)*

**The Epiphany of Our Lord** will be celebrated with a very special observance of EVENING PRAYER (or Vespers) on Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 in the evening. If you would like to attend this service but have difficulty driving at night please contact the Church Office so that we may try to coordinate rides for those who may need them. On the other hand, if you plan on attending and would be willing to provide transportation for a fellow worshipper, please contact the Office so that we can match you up with someone in need of a ride.

**Open Gym** Sundays from January 8<sup>th</sup> – April 29<sup>th</sup> our congregation has use of Concordia's gym from 2 – 4:30 pm. Please come and join us! The video on concussions must be viewed by all participants before joining in an activity. For those under the age of 18 the video must be viewed at least once per year. The website to go to is <http://www.mywiaa.org/lystedt/default.htm>. The video is only 14 minutes long – please view it.

**Wednesday Family Nights** Beginning Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 7:30 pm our Board of Education will be offering a six week family night at church. Pastor Dan will lead adults in a class, "The Parables of Jesus," Pastor Brad will lead the Sr. High Youth; Melissa Varvil & Bonnie Jean Huset will lead the 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grades; and Sue Tofflemire & Katie Van Volkenburg will lead the younger students. We will have family time from 7 – 7:30 pm. More help is always appreciated – ask how you can support this family night.

# Lunch Bunch News

A good time was had by all who attended **THE LUNCH BUNCH** gathering on Tuesday, December 6. Pastor Dan had a great message for us that related to Christmas. Rosetta had prepared an excellent ham with raisin sauce and ham gravy and those who attended brought side dishes to supplement the ham. Our meal finished with delicious desserts. We then had a gift exchange and the afternoon was concluded with a

great concert by the choir and string choirs of Concordia School. However - we had a problem that has disturbed many of us - you may not have been there! We recognize that December may not be the best time for groups to gather, like The Lunch Bunch because of so many other extras for the month. And we know a number had health problems that prevented them from attending. But - 12 was the lowest we have

had - usually we number in the 20s. So we are hoping you will resolve to join us this coming year - 2012. We are trying to include some speakers, some short day trips, and games that will interest more of you. Will we see you on **TUESDAY, JANUARY 3?** We hope so!

*Pastor Ken Boetcher*  
253-847-5925



## Preschool News

[www.littlelambstacoma.com](http://www.littlelambstacoma.com)

As our students come back from break we will talk about how God used a star to lead wise men to Jesus; how Jesus wowed the teachers at the synagogue at the age of 12; Jesus' baptism, and we will end January with Jesus calling the disciples and beginning His public ministry.

Our preschool board has voted on designating all memorial gifts and Thrivent Choice dollars to be put into our own preschool scholarship fund. This will enable us to truly be a mission preschool to families

who are really wanting a Christian education for their children. Please continue to pray for us for guidance and discernment in this important endeavor as we work on details concerning this fund.

Thank you for your continued support of our preschool and the families with which we share Christ. To God be the glory!

*Bonnie Jean Huset*  
Preschool Director / Teacher

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**Thank You!** to the congregation of Good Shepherd for the expressions of appreciation and love, cards and gifts this Christmas season! We all greatly appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness very much!

Your Staff: *Pastor Dan & Ruth, Pastor Brad & Melissa, Denes, Debbie, Bonnie Jean, Caron, and Valerie*

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## Women in Mission

Weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 9:15 am.

Weekly Quilting on Tuesdays at 10 am.

Mites collected on January 8<sup>th</sup>  
Seafarers Auxiliary – January 24<sup>th</sup>

Dear Lutheran Ladies,

Welcome to 2012! We invite you to share with other women in Bible Studies, Prayer, Time and Support. God's Word is always our starting place. Where will it take you? Maybe you will help with Altar Guild. Perhaps women of Good Shepherd will have another retreat that you will attend.

You may desire to help with the LWML Convention in Olympia in June or just attend as a guest. Are you willing to help with special events at Good Shepherd but not wanting to be "in charge?" You can always just come and offer to help. When we, as women, do things together we form bonds of sisterhood. Remember **You** are my sister in Christ!

*Jane Oberg*  
475-2832

## Brunch & Bible Study and Pink Shoe Club

The Women's Brunch & Bible Study and Girls' Pink Shoe Club will meet on Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am with a shared breakfast followed by a Bible Study for the ladies and activities with Miss

Sue for the girls. We will end promptly at 11:30 am. If you need babysitting, please call the office at 473-4848 in advance. All ladies "young" through "old" are welcome to attend.

### FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY

### CHILI COOK-OFF

Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>  
12 noon

Tune up your chili recipes!  
Join us for our Annual Chili Cook Off!

Alternate food will be available  
for those that do not eat chili.

*(No Pot Blessing January 8<sup>th</sup>)*