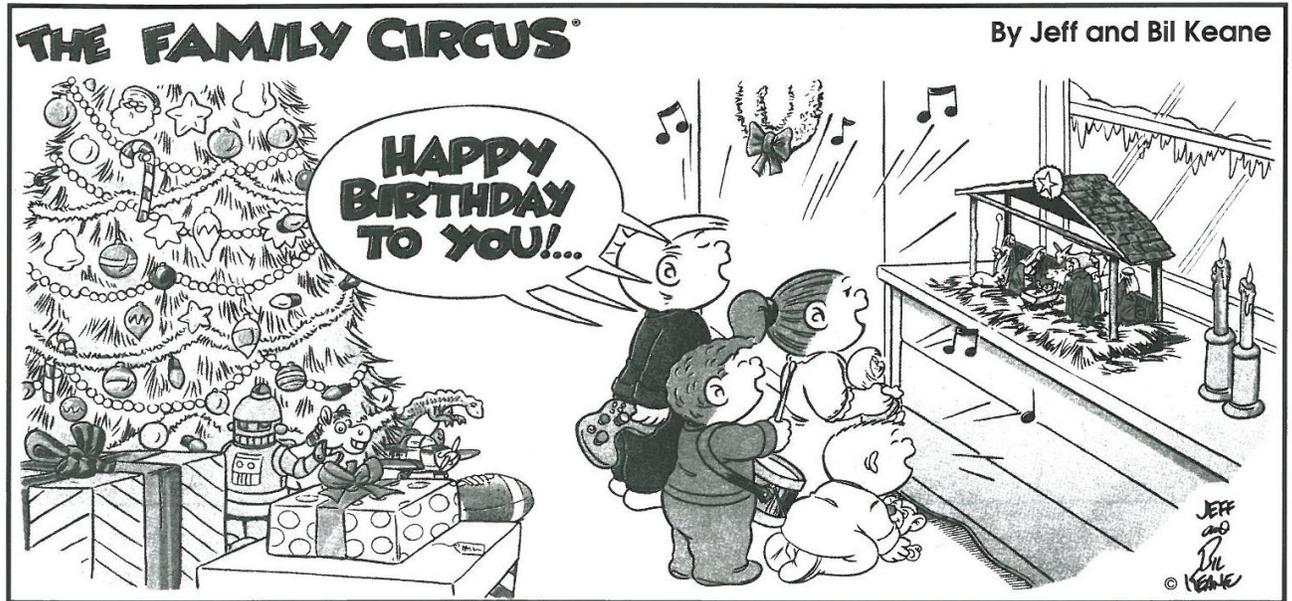


GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
Tacoma, Washington

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

December 2012



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Christ the Savior is Born MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Denes Van Parys Bonnie Jean Huset

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Debbie Fanner

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New Beginnings

As we move from the end of one church year to the beginning of another, it's hard not to think about what we leave behind, and what we head into. What we've left in the last year has been both bitter and sweet—things and people we've loved that are no longer near us, and things and people that have hurt us which we're glad to forget. Our past moves behind us like the receding vision in a rear view mirror, the more distant things seemingly less real than those which are closer in time and space.

On the converse, we see and anticipate much in the days ahead. Our view in front of us may be full of hope or fear, but we all have our expectations for what the next weeks, months, and years will hold. We're not always sure how or why we think these things will occur, but most people will cast their minds far beyond the present moment, as we try to plan for accomplishing the vocations and duties God has given us in this life.

But something worth pondering at the turning of the year, is the way God sees our past, present, and future. From His perspective, there's nothing so far into your past, that He doesn't see it as plainly as that which you do today. And likewise, what lies ahead of you in that murky future, is not murky at all to Him. From God's perspective, as the One who transcends time and space, all your days are present to Him, from your beginning to the expanses of your eternity.

If we were to rest upon our works and deeds for security with God, that would be a terrifying thought—that God never forgets a single one of our days, either before us or behind us, but as the Judge of the Universe, He is present in them all. His rear view mirror never gets smaller... or rather, his view of all time, never diminishes. In His piercing and penetrating eyes, we all have sinned, and fallen short of His glory—there is none of us righteous, no, not one. None of us is going to impress God with our piety or virtue or merit in this instant of time, when He continually sees us in our totality of existence, and every thought, word, or deed which has ever erupted from our soiled and fallen nature.

But if we see God through the Cross of His Only Begotten Son, we find something marvelous. Our God, eternally present in every one of our days, entreats us and receives us as dearly beloved children, forgiven for the sake of His Son's Sacrifice on our behalf. Every day, from our beginning to the expanses of our eternity, is a day of grace and mercy and hope, because of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We may stand here, today, peering both backward and forward with fear and troubled souls, but Jesus enters every one of those days with His promise of life, forgiveness, and peace.

That's the Gospel message of new beginnings—that God has placed our sin as far from us as the east is from the west. He doesn't just forgive us today, but every day—past, present, and future. That's the power of your Baptism, the power of the Blood of Christ poured out for you. When Jesus went out to reconcile the world to Himself through the Cross, He accomplished precisely that. And His Word to us is to believe, and live, in Him—forgiven and free.

May this new year be for you a remembrance of the new beginning you have been given in Jesus Christ. May your every day, be a remembrance of the new life into which you are born as a Baptized child of God, and the fellowship you share with every other saint who has ever lived by grace through faith in Jesus. May you leave behind your sin and guilt, as God has left your sin and guilt at Calvary. May you leave your fear and worry behind, as He secured for you an eternal blessing and grace through His Cross. May you begin every day of every year for all eternity, in the blessed assurance that you a beloved, forgiven, and free, for the sake of Him who gave Himself for us: Jesus Christ, The Lord. Amen.

Pastor Brad

Music in God's Ears

A few weeks ago the lamp on the overhead projector in Good Shepherd's Sanctuary burned out. While I watched with a mixture of amusement and concern from my perch in the organ/choir loft as people who had never opened a hymnal for worship before struggled to keep up, the situation prompted me to consider what we have lost by not using the hymnal.

I and many of my musician friends profess that they learned how to read music in church and not from any plan or graded choir program: it was simply from opening the Hymnal every week and seeing those notes dancing up and down the page. We absorbed music from church. I fear this has ceased to happen in our churches as we move from Hymnals to Screen projections. I can already see that in the lack of familiarity some choir members have with the printed score compared to several years ago.

There is also the difficulty of introducing new music to a congregation. Those who read music will be more quickly drawn into singing if they can visualize the melody. Many who can't read music will at least recognize when the melody goes up and when it goes down. These can help those without those skills. All benefit.

More profoundly, I feel we have lost the integrity and awareness of traditional liturgy. I can attest to several conversations I have had with parishioners over the past year that showed their ignorance of the main points of the Mass/Divine Service/Gottesdienst (*pick your term, they all mean similar things*).

How can this be? I will tell you. When you open a Worship Bulletin or a Hymnal, you can easily grasp the form of the service. You will also realize that certain elements repeat each week. Furthermore, you will notice when something is OMITTED and you might even wonder "Why?" and challenge the people who have the power to restore it.

When we worship "off the wall" with projections, we will worship in a constant world of "now," never aware of where we are headed or of what we may have been denied. We will tend to blindly accept whatever is served to us from the buffet of options and have no concept of the traditions being changed without our notice.

One final thought occurred to me as I noted some of our steadfast hymnal-users helping those who were overwhelmed by using the Service Book. This used to happen all the time in our congregations: a non-Lutheran would appear for worship and someone nearby would welcome them, help them with the hymnal and shepherd them through the service.

Now that assistance is no longer needed. We can follow the service by simply following the screen. We are so focused on that screen that sometimes it appears from my perch that the screen is our object of worship. We even can fail to focus on the Pastor because we are distracted by reading his "lines" as he reads them.

Do I think the projector has no place in worship? No. Do I think it can be a distraction? Yes. I encourage you to use the hymnal more regularly. Even when the projections return, it can help ground you in the music, in the liturgy and in the service as it unfolds.

Blessings.

DVP (Denes Van Parys)

If you would like to continue the discussion of all things related to worship, please join me at my website: denesvanparys.com. Also known as "Music in God's Ears" (musicingodsears.com). This site will enable us to widen this very important conversation



Preschool News

www.littlelambstacoma.com

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Cookie Sale – those who donated cookies, helped fill the boxes, and those who purchased! The cookies were delicious. We raised close to \$300 with this event. Thank you for your generous support.

The Calendar Sale is going well. If you would still like a 2013 calendar with photographs of God's creations by five of our members please contact me. We will receive orders from this point. The cost of the calendars is **\$10.00**.

Our board has been very busy during the month of November. Besides our fundraisers, we officially applied for accreditation through the National Lutheran Schools Association. From the time our application is processed. We will have three years to complete the process. We sincerely ask for your continued prayers of guidance, strength, and direction for our preschool. Thank you!

Bonnie Jean Huset
Director / Teacher

ANNUAL VOTERS'S MEETING COMING SOON!

The Annual Voters' Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, December 9th at 12:15 pm**. Items on the agenda include approving a budget/spending guide for next year (see bulletin board for more information), election of officers (see bulletin board), a by-law change that would combine the Stewardship and Fellowship Boards into one Board, discuss a by-law change that could combine the Education and the Youth Boards, and choosing the special mission project for next year. Please plan to attend.

Lunch Bunch News

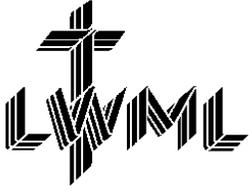
LUNCH BUNCH will finish 2012 with our Christmas Party. Our meeting is **Tuesday, December 4th**. You are invited -please bring a dish to share for our noon meal and a wrapped gift for the exchange. Value of gift is set at \$3-5, nothing fancy

or too expensive. Why not join us for this month's activities. We will also do a bit of "sing-along" of Christmas carols. See U there?

Pastor Ken Boetcher

Men's Breakfast / Bible Study December 15th

Join us **Saturday, December 15th at 8 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: "They're not called the Ten Suggestions" (Exodus 20). *Pastor Dan*



Women in Mission

Please join us for our activities in December!

Weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 9:15 am.

Weekly Quilting on Tuesdays at 10 am.

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Enjoy the blessings of this special season.

Remember: Jesus
Others
You

Serving the Lord With Gladness,
Jane Oberg

Advent / Christmas Special Services

The flesh and blood of the God-man Jesus brings our salvation. God has become one of us. The mystery of the incarnation causes all of us, to ponder anew the sacrificial love of God. To be fully one of us, to share with us in all things, to know sin, and yet to become sin for us, that is the stuff that causes all creation to fall at His feet and worship. There is no greater love of God than the work of Jesus Christ in rescuing fallen creation. Here is the pure Gospel.

Join us this Advent Season for our Wednesday evening services. Services begin at 7:00 p.m., and are preceded at 6:00 p.m. by our Advent Suppers. Our theme is **“SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS”**

December 5th: The Invitation
December 12th: The Announcement
December 19th: His Throne

Our Christmas schedule includes two services on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Sunday School Christmas Service
“Angels From the Realms of Glory”
7:00 p.m.

Service of Lessons and Carols
11:00 p.m.

One service on Christmas Day, December 25th, 10 a.m.

To close out the year 2012, and to look ahead to 2013, we have a **New Year's Eve Service:**
December 31st – 7:00 p.m.