

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

December 2013

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS



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"Joy to the World, the Lord is come!"

Pastor Dan Gerken

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Pastor David Schmidt

Denes Van Parys

Bonnie Huset

Caron Long

Heather Oechsner

Debbie Tanner

Valerie Rice

Waiting with God's People

As just about every kid knows, the time from Thanksgiving to Christmas is a festive time of anticipation and waiting. There are all the decorations, the parties, the cool old hymns and carols, and all the food—especially the sweets—that tend to mark this time of year. Then of course, there's waiting through the end of first semester school activities, from programs to tests, all in anticipation of that wonderful winter break around Christmas time. But there's something deeper that we wait for during this time, and the rhythm of the Church year helps us to see through the clutter of the season.

Advent is the beginning of the Church year, and it helps us re-orient ourselves after the long season of Pentecost. In the ancient Church, Advent was considered a small Lenten season of reflection, repentance, and faithful waiting. We find ourselves once again, sitting with the ancient Jewish people, hearing the voice of the Prophets, and waiting for the coming of the Messiah. For millennia the People of God waited for the fulfillment of God's promise made all the way back in the Garden, that the Seed of the Woman would come and crush the head of the serpent, the Devil, who enslaved mankind through sin and death. In the light of God's

promised redemption, the People of God waited in faith and repentance for their Redeemer to come and set them free. Generation after generation came and went, but the Word of the Lord endured among them, and they waited together in the hope of their salvation.

This is a good lesson for us to learn anew. In our time and place, there is much darkness and sadness, pain and suffering. Storms ravage, diseases plague, and economics impoverish. The Devil still seems to be at work in the world, inspiring heretics and false teachers to deceive many, terrorizing whole communities and nations, while intruding into every home and hearth. Sin, death, and hell seem so close at times, that were it not for God's Promise of salvation in Jesus Christ, our hope would fail us. So great the darkness and howling winds of the world can be, that the dim light of unaided human reason quickly flickers out. Only the light that shines forth from the Eternally Begotten Son of God breaks the darkness, and only His Word endures forever. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can deliver His people, in this and every age, and only His Word can calm the fears and restore the hope of the People of God.

And so we find ourselves today, gathered around the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—the One who is God of God, Light of Light. Huddled in the warmth and protection of His grace and love, we cling to His promise of salvation by faith in His Word. Though the nations rage, the Devil howls, and the forces of darkness clamor on every side, we shall fear no evil—for He is with us, and His rod and His staff shall comfort us. He prepares a table before us in the presence of our great enemies, and our cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall remain in the House of the Lord forever—gathered together with all the People of God, from every time and place. Together in the eternal light of His promised Redemption, we sing forth His melodies of faith, hope and love, that others may hear His Word through us, over the screeching winds and the howling enemy, so they too may believe and live. Here we wait in His Light and Life, full of joy and peace that the world cannot understand, knowing that our Redemption draws near. Amen—come Lord Jesus.

Pastor Brad

Men's Breakfast / Bible Study

December 21st

Join us **Saturday, December 21st 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: "Rain Comes from Where?" (Numbers 25).



Pastor Dan

Music in God's Ears

As the Church Year winds down, we begin our Liturgical New Year with the Season of Advent.

While the secular New Year wraps up one year and signifies the new opportunities of the next, our Liturgical Season of Advent designates not only a beginning also period of anticipation.

You probably have noticed that for several weeks our Scripture Readings have focused on the Last Days, the Judgment and, in general, the reasons why we need the Saving Grace of a Sacrificed Messiah. The season of Advent gives us time to hear again the Promises of His Coming (His Advent) and the story of His arrival as a human baby on our lowly planet.

You will notice some changes to our worship as a result of the focus

of this season. For example, we will be shifting to the more somber Setting II of Divine Service. This is all better to set up the stirring and joyful options that we typically omit during the seasons of preparation (Advent and Lent) and which will return with Christmas.

For example, we omit the Hymn Praise/Gloria (Glory to God in the Highest) during Advent. In so doing, our full Christmas joy will be that much sweeter when we sing it at Christmas and sweeter still, as we are reminded that the words of Gloria itself are a retelling of the sweet words spoken by the Angel who proclaimed the Gospel to the shepherds in Bethlehem that night of Christ's birth.

Finally, people always wonder why we don't sing Christmas Songs or Carols during December.

After all, they wonder, why can't we sing the same the songs that I hear in the Mall every day?

That question is complicated and has more than one answer but let's focus on the primary one: Advent is about preparation and anticipation. To sing the punch-line, the end of the story too soon, deflates the story. We also lose the opportunity to live in the world of Hope and Promise that permeates Advent. Christmas fulfills Hope and Promise with Redemption and Rejoicing.

Let's agree not to rush through Advent so quickly that we miss its lessons and rush without heed into Christmas without truly relishing the joy its brings.

DVP (Dennis Van Parys)



-Preschool News

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Thank you to everyone who helped participate with our cookie fundraiser – from making cookies, boxing cookies, and purchasing and eating cookies! We received just over \$300.00 from you, our caring congregation!

The 2014 calendar sale is continuing in December. These calendars feature photographs from our congregational members and friends and are being

www.littlelambstacoma.com

sold for \$10.00 each. Please pick one up in the narthex or call the church office to order one. Thank you!

We give more thanks to God our provider for now providing twenty-two students at our preschool. Please continue your prayers for the preschool students, staff, and board as we strive to share Jesus with all of our families.

Merry Christmas,

Bonnie Huset
Director / Teacher

Lunch Bunch News

THE LUNCH BUNCH, formerly known as "The Prime Timers" was reorganized a couple years ago for the purpose of providing fellowship with members and friends of Good Shepherd Congregation who might be interested in becoming better acquainted with other members. For that purpose we meet on the first Tuesday of each month - starting with a short devotion by Pastor Gerken, followed by a shared meal, and some type of

program. Our attendance varies from month to month - but if you are free on the first Tuesday of each month you will be welcome to join us!

COME! JOIN US ON **Tuesday, December 3.**

Pastor Ken Boetcher

SCHOOL NEWS

from **Concordia Lutheran Schools** and **Mount Rainier Lutheran High School**

- **MRLH** hosts PLU's 24th Annual Winterfest on December 14. Winterfest helps provide joy and the spirit of Christmas to 500 low income families who are experiencing economic despair in the Parkland community. **MRLH** is conducting a Toy Drive to help fund this wonderful holiday tradition.
- **Concordia Lutheran** gives back to local FISH and church food banks and also supplies residents at the Wright Street Apartments in Tacoma with non-perishable food items. These items are collected all month, dedicated at chapel, and students help dispense the food to the various locations to help bless the needy during this time.
- **Mount Rainier** Middle School Night is December 12. Families you're invited! Come see Hawk basketball action as they take on the Eagles of Christian Faith. Games begin at 4:30. Free admission when you wear your school's colors. This night is filled with fun, give-a-ways and a great way to learn about MRLH while seeing the new location at PLU.
- **Concordia's** Learning Edge Program continues to offer high-quality assessment and intervention for all types of learning needs, from basic skills development to enrichment and accelerated curriculum. Our team approach allows for optimum flexibility and individualized approaches to learning as part of our well-established academic program. We welcome visitors to our school to experience our unique approach first-hand!
- **You are invited to join our schools for special holiday presentations.**
 - **Concordia:**
 - Christmas Choir Concert, Dec. 17 at 7:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
 - K/1st grade Christmas Program, Dec. 12 at 7:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
 - **Mount Rainier:**
 - Winter Fine Arts Evening, Dec. 17 in Lagerquist Hall on the PLU campus. Art showing begins at 6:00 p.m. and concert follows at 6:30 p.m.

Come see us! We love to share about our schools. Contact Sheila Larsen at sheila@cls-mrlh.org for more information. Visit our websites at www.concordiatacoma.com and www.mrlh.org.



Women in Mission

-Mark your Calendars:

Tuesdays: 9:15 am – LWML Bible Study and Quilting

(Note: there will be no Bible Study and Quilting on December 24th and December 31st)

To **ALL** Women of Good Shepherd: Greetings in **His Name!**

Did you know that all communicant women of the LC-MS are members of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League? LWML, more than 70 years old, has gathered more than \$100,000,000 (one hundred million) for mission efforts – Mites in Action!

Here at Good Shepherd we:



- **Gather Mites**
- **Meet together for Weekly Bible Studies**
- **Serve Funeral / Memorial Receptions**
- **Offer Wedding Reception Services**
- **Make Quilts for Lutheran World Relief**
- **Provide 150 Christmas Boxes for Tacoma Seafarers’ Center**



... and the list goes on...



Since 1984 I have been **YOUR** connection to Rainier =Zone, Washington / Alaska District and national LWML. Sisters, - We all are one!



LWML Women’s Ministry is planning a **SPECIAL EVENT** for **YOU** **Saturday, January 11th at 11:30 am.** Details to come...

Serving the Lord with Gladness
Jane Oberg