



The Church Door

Dr. Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church



FROM THE PASTOR

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (1 Cor 3:6).

I recently decided to subscribe to a magazine that used to be a favorite of mine, but I had not been receiving it for several years. It is called Net Results and deals with church issues. It is through them that I first learned of Friendship Sunday. On their web page they had a sample article from a reprint pac called "Share-a-Dozen-Long-Stemmed-Chocolate-Chip-Cookies-With-a-Friend Sunday" Proves Effective.

Since we are planning a Friendship Sunday for this February 13th, I though I would share some of that article with you. If you would like to read the entire article you can go to <http://www.netresults.org/reprint-pacs.htm> and select "sample article."

Here are some excerpts for the article: "We began exploring ways to increase our membership. Studies show that 70 percent to 90 percent of the new members in every congregation attended the first time because people from the congregation invited them. We needed a way to acclimate our members to inviting others. Our discovery began when we saw the "Bring-a-Friend Sunday" method in the May 1995 *Net Results*."

"The first year we used this concept, thirty-one of our guests eventually joined our congregation (many became cookie-committee members the following year). The second year, nineteen of our guests have joined

thus far, with another fifteen continuing in faithful attendance but not yet ready to join."

"The first year we made 65 chocolate-chip cookie bouquets that invited 103 people to worship. Sixty-nine attended our services the following Sunday. The second year we made 49 bouquets that invited 79 people, and 50 attended our services. The first year, we followed each service with a reception/coffee hour where our congregation's members could warmly welcome our guests (the next year we offered a small meal)."

"The Plan Works Cookie Sunday has become an integral part of our outreach program. In our size church, it requires a committee of approximately ten people who give an average of six hours each. After the first year the process becomes much easier. You learn shortcuts and adapt the program to your specific needs."

"Please consider carefully these faith facts:

- Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).
- 80% of all people in a church first come because a friend or relative invited them (Lyle Schaller).
- 70% of all people who do not now attend a church responded that if someone invited them they would react favorably (George Gallup, Jr., 1992).
- The average Lutheran invites a friend to worship every 24 years (Pastor Jim Capers, ELCA Evangelism staff)!!"

It is true that the plan works, but you have to work the plan. We at DML want our church to grow, but are we willing to put the work into it that is required? I am convinced that God wants our church to grow and has equipped us with all that is needed to cause the growth --- all except our commitment to make it happen. The Apostle Paul wrote, *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together;*" (1 Cor 3:6-9a).

For we are, as Paul said, God's servants working together and we will receive wages according to the labor or each. Although I am convinced that God wants our church to grow, I am also certain that God will not just cause a flood of new folks to pour through our doors. We will have to work at it, each and every person will have to work at it. As God's servants we are called to plant and water.

Consider baking a batch of cookies and taking them to a friend and invite them to come to church on Friendship Sunday. Since that Sunday is the day before Valentine's Day and you may find other ways to be creative in your invitation Prayerfully consider how God wants you to be involved.

May God Bless our Efforts,
Pastor Dennis

Worship Assistants

Hymns & Lessons

February 6—The Transfiguration of Our Lord

<i>Deacon</i>	Laurie Tilden		Hymns
<i>Lector</i>	Lauren Johnson	Lessons	#526—Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise**
<i>Acolyte</i>	Andrew Kitchka	Exodus 24:12-18	#315—Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**
<i>Nursery</i>	Polly Eagle	Psalm 2	#518—Beautiful Savior**
<i>Ushers</i>	Mike Sellon & Russ Tilden	2 Peter 1:16-21	#552—In Thee is Gladness
<i>Tellers</i>	Tom & Donna Whitehead Gordon Eggleton	Matthew 17:1-9	

February 13—1st Sunday in Lent

<i>Deacon</i>	Andrew Kitchka		Hymns
<i>Lector</i>	None	Lessons	#752—I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (<i>Here I Am, Lord</i>)
<i>Acolyte</i>	Becky Stroh	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	#780—What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine (<i>Leaning on the Everlasting Arms</i>)
<i>Nursery</i>	Lauren Johnson	Psalm 32	#651—Shine, Jesus, Shine
<i>Ushers</i>	Randy & Cindy Borreson	Romans 5:12-19	
<i>Tellers</i>	Randy & Cindy Borreson Polly Eagle	Matthew 4:1-11	

February 20—2nd Sunday in Lent

<i>Deacon</i>	Rose Justian		Hymns
<i>Lector</i>	Dave Justian	Lessons	#684—Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness
<i>Acolyte</i>	Eric Burke	Genesis 12:1-4a	#693—Baptized in Water
<i>Nursery</i>	Nancy Johnson	Psalm 121	#734—Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
<i>Ushers</i>	Emogene Cotal & Jan Wolf	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	#743—Stay with Us
<i>Tellers</i>	LaVern & Irene Borreson Bill Kitchka	John 3:1-17	

February 27—3rd Sunday in Lent

<i>Deacon</i>	Tom Whitehead		Hymns
<i>Lector</i>	Tom Whitehead	Lessons	#487—Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
<i>Acolyte</i>	Andy Doane	Exodus 17:1-7	#94—My Song is Love Unknown**
<i>Nursery</i>	Beulah Justian	Psalm 95	#212—Let Us Break Bread Together**
<i>Ushers</i>	John Moore & Tom Proksa	Romans 5:1-11	#327—Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me**
<i>Tellers</i>	Tom & Betty Proksa John Moore	John 4:5-42	

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS
If you are unable to fulfill your responsibility, please contact:

Deacons, Acolytes, Tellers	Cindy Borreson	(616) 846-2477
Lectors, Ushers	Janet Wolf	(231) 739-7328
Nursery	Jan Ward	(231) 799-0424



About Prayer

Said the Holy One to Israel, "I have told you that when you pray you should do so in the synagogue in your city. If you cannot pray in the synagogue, pray in your field. If you cannot pray in your field, pray in your house. If you cannot pray in your house, pray on your bed. If you cannot pray on your bed, meditate in your heart."
— Midrash Psalms 4:9

Our dear friend, Bea Eggleton, passed away Sunday, January 23rd after a lingering illness. Please keep her family and friends in your prayers as they go through this difficult time.

Rest eternal, grant her O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.

Those in need of healing:

Brett Cavanaugh (Clif Hellman's nephew)

Beryl Connelly

Millie Fredrick

Stephen Hellman

Ann Hulka

Floyd Nickisch

Vicki Peterson

Nancy Rizzo (Ann Markgraf's daughter)

Jeannette Roach

Judy Slezak

(Irene Borreson's sister & previous member)

Paul Suchovsky

Lowell Tambling

Remember our friends and family members in the Military

SSgt. Kevin William Sellon (*Mike & Carol Sellon's son*)
United States Army—Stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Sgt. Kenneth W. Hawkins (*Tom and Betty Proksa's nephew*)
United States Army—Iraq

AJ-3 Lisa Pepera (*Virginia Kolarik's granddaughter*)
United States Navy—Serving on the USS Kitty Hawk

E1 Lynzle Heiss (*Ron Heiss's Daughter*)
United States Army—Basic Training, Fort Leonardwood, Missouri

If you'd like to add a name to this list, please contact Cindy Borreson.

Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Do you have a loved one you would like included in the prayers or added to our prayer list? Please contact Cindy Borreson at 616-846-2477 or by email at cborreson@charter.net and she will see they are included.

Congregation Council Meeting—January 10, 2004



Present: Gene Broge, Emogene Cotal, Brian Doane, Pastor Stroh, Russ Tilden, Tom Whitehead

Excused: Cindy Borreson, Randy Borreson, Gordon Eggleton, Steve Hellman

President Gene Broge called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Devotions: Pastor led devotions with a reading from 2 Corinthians 12.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the December 13, 2004 Council meeting were presented in written form.

Emogene noted that her name was misspelled in the Pastor's Report section of the minutes. This will be corrected. Gene asked Tom to verify that Dave and Rose Justian will be delegates to the Stony Lake evangelism meeting in January.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2004 was presented in printed form.

Pastor's Report: Pastor presented a written report and talked about some of the key points:

- Pastor said that Diane Miller of Habitat for Humanity will be at DML on 3/13/05 for a temple talk about Habitat.

Committee Reports

Property

The committee met on Wednesday, 1/5/05. Brian presented a report of what was discussed (an e-mail dated 1/7/05). Brian felt that the boiler

was in pretty good shape but needs some work.

- Steve Hellman joined the Council meeting at that point to say that he was resigning from Council due to his poor health. He returned blueprints of the church that he had taken to be photocopied. It appeared that he brought in one set of copies as well as the original blueprints. He also provided a receipt for the copying. There was a question after he left of whether another set of copies might have been loaned to a heating contractor as part of getting a bid for work on the heating system.

Returning to the discussion of the Property Committee's meeting, Brian reported that the vents in the peak of the nave had been open but are now closed.

Pastor lubricated a pump for the boiler on New Year's Day to fix a problem in which there was no heat in the Nave that day.

Brian mentioned that it would probably cost around \$1500 to replace the compressor, in addition to the cost of running it year round. He said that replacing the current pressurized system of thermostats with electronic ones could greatly reduce the operating cost of the system.

Evangelism

Committee met. Will have Friendship Sunday on Feb. 13th and will include Teen Challenge and the Transfiguration Day meal on that Sunday also.

Finance

Tom explained the three goals of Finance Committee with respect to the Thrivent investments:

1. Delay withdrawals from the investments for as long as possible in order to maximum their returns.
2. Try to withdraw no more than \$850 per month on average from the investments in 2005 for a total of \$10,200. If necessary, the committee is allowed to withdraw up to \$12,000 for the year. (The investment funds can only be used for Pastor's housing allowance.)
3. Move toward paying the full housing allowance from Current income instead of the investments by 2010.

With these goals in mind, the committee decided to use the following procedure for paying Pastor's housing allowance and using funds from the investments and the Reserve Fund.

1. Eliminate taking \$40 per week from Current income to add to the Reserve Fund. Only contributions designated for the Reserve Fund on weekly envelopes will be placed in the Reserve Fund.
2. Pay Pastor's housing allowance from the checking account (Current funds), with no immediate transfers from the Thrivent investments.
3. If the checking account gets low and needs money to pay current bills, including the housing allowance, the Treasurer will withdraw money from the Reserve Fund first.
4. If the Reserve Fund goes below \$3000, the Treasurer will withdraw money from the Thrivent investments as follows:
 - o ideally up to no more than

\$850 per month from the start of the year to repay the Reserve Fund for money used for the housing allowance; or

- up to a maximum of \$1,000 per month from the start of the year, or a maximum of \$12,000 for the year.
5. The Treasurer will keep a log of all withdrawals from the Thrivent investments to ensure that the withdrawals do not exceed what has been authorized for the housing allowance.
- Tom also explained \$12,034.62 had been withdrawn from the investments in 2004 but the balance in the Reserve Fund had increased by \$856.29 for that same period. If the Finance Committee had adopted the procedure described above in 2004, only \$11,178.33 would have been withdrawn from the investments. This would have been very close to the Committee's original goal of reducing the withdrawals by \$1000 for 2004.

Gene requested that the Finance Committee inform the Council when the money withdrawn from the investments starts getting close to the authorized amounts. He also requested that the Committee periodically send a letter to the congregation regarding the status of DML's finances.

As recommended by the Finance Committee, Tom moved that the church purchase 60 additional copies of With One Voice ("blue books") and a new organist edition of the Lutheran Book of Worship ("green book"), using money from the Memorial Fund. Emogene seconded. Approved.

Parish Education

- Met today (1/10/05) with the

Sunday School teachers. The B.I. B.L.E. Club currently has 9 students. The committee is working on a play for Easter. They need help with props for the play. Dave Justian had donated \$100 towards the cost of props.

- Committee meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month.
- Will also work on getting the children more involved in the service, with ushering, music, etc.
- Laurie Tilden has been making worksheets for the students to use during services.

Social Ministry

Russ called Beulah Justian to find out who had helped her with cards, flowers, etc.

Stewardship

No report. The Council will need to replace Steve Hellman on the Committee. The Council suggested a candidate for Steve's position. Pastor will see if that person is willing to be on Council and fill the Stewardship Committee position.

Worship & Music

The committee has been working on normal worship services for January.

Executive Committee/ Mutual Ministry

Didn't meet in December. Will meet on 1/22/05 at Nino's to discuss the Performance Appraisal form that Tom had distributed at the November meeting. The appraisal covers the Pastor, Council, and Congregation.

Special Committees

Dorcas Circle Chicken will be served for the Transfiguration Day dinner on 2/13/05. Lauren Stroh will prepare it.

Eve Circle No report

Men's Club Met on 1/8/2005 at Nino's Restaurant. The men are planning to be involved in Habitat for Humanity's effort to build five houses in Muskegon in 2005. This is part of the nation-wide Jimmy Carter project with

Habitat for Humanity. Also, a Chili Cook-off will be held on 1/15/05.

Youth Group No report.

Petitions and Communications

Tom read a letter from Bill & Emily Kitchka indicating that they are no longer able to change the seasonal banners in church and would like someone to take over that responsibility. They will also be away on vacation from 1/28-3/3/05 and need some volunteers to set up and take down the communion ware and the coffee hour service.

- Gene & Blanche will take care of the coffee hour service.
- Russ will take care of the banners.
- Tom will ask Cindy to put a notice in the bulletins and newsletter asking for volunteers to handle the communion ware. Gene will also mention it at the congregational meeting.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

- Tom spoke to A&B Kitchens about replacing the top on the large circular table in the fellowship hall. Pastor will call A&B to set up a time for them to look at the table so they can provide an estimate of the cost.
- A person from Rycenga Lumber who installs Anderson windows on his own time will look at the church's windows to estimate the cost to replace them. He will also look at the windows in the nave.

Emogene moved to adjourn the meeting and Russ seconded. The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Whitehead
Church Secretary

Financial Information—December 31, 2004

ASSETS

Cash & Bank Accounts

Funds for General Operations	
Checkbook	\$2,298.64
Cash Account	\$0.00
Savings – Reserve	<u>\$3,656.03</u>
Total Funds for General Operations	\$5,954.67

Funds for Special Purposes

Savings—Designated	
Roof Fund (Loan)	\$1,801.63
Church Repairs	\$1,769.88
Evangelism	\$69.00
Eve Circle	\$1,622.89
Kitchen Fund	\$350.20
Men's Club	\$275.91
Youth Group	<u>\$149.39</u>
Total Savings—Designated	\$6,038.90
Savings – Memorial	\$6,707.50
Savings – Social Security	<u>\$1,116.59</u>
Total Funds for Special Purposes	<u>\$13,862.99</u>

Total Cash and Bank Accounts \$19,817.66

Investments—Designated for Housing Allowance

LB Money Market—Cash	\$1,306.17
LB Fund	\$29,703.62
LB Income Fund	<u>\$41,097.45</u>

Total Investments \$72,107.24

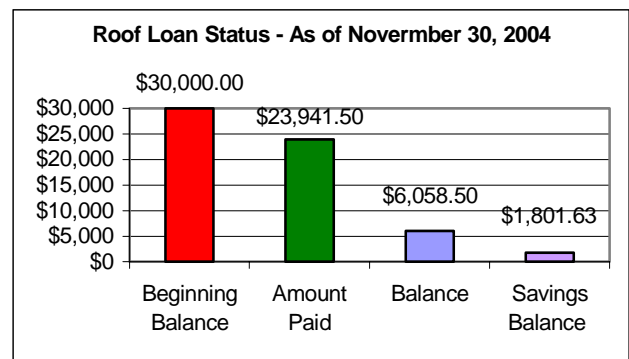
TOTAL ASSETS \$91,924.90

LIABILITIES

Roof Loan Liability	\$5,643.21
WH—Federal Tax Liability	\$1,870.05
WH—State Tax Liability	<u>\$247.15</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	<u>\$7,760.41</u>

Breakdown of Giving for Loan (Loan payment \$456.48)

December 2003	\$911.00
January 2004	\$302.00
February 2004	\$373.00
March 2004	\$419.00
April 2004	\$1,218.00
May 2004	\$717.00
June 2004	\$505.00
July 2004	\$764.00
August 2004	\$722.00
September 2004	\$438.50
October 2004	\$924.50
November 2004	\$298.50



Summary Information for December

Average Attendance for December = 65

Offering Needed to meet 2004 Budget
\$7,830.54

Amount Received toward Budget \$5,267.50

The Church Door

The "Church Door" title is taken from the "Theses Door" of the Castle Church which has made Wittenberg so famous.

Just as the "Theses Door" was used as a bulletin board for notices in Luther's time, this newsletter can also be used by our members to communicate with each other and to our guests about church events. Published monthly it is available the last Sunday of the month.

Please contact Cindy Borreson (616.846.2477 or
cborreson@charter.net) to insert articles for next month's newsletter.

What's Happening at Dr. Martin Luther?

EVE Circle

Eve Circle meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm.

Everyone is invited to join them.

Contact Betty Proksa if you have any questions.

Dorcas Circle

Meetings are held the 1st Monday of each month at 10:00 am. Right now the ladies are planning the Friendship Dinner for Sunday, February 13.

Please see Irene Borreson or Ann Hamil for information or if you would like to help with the dinner.

Teen Challenge— Friendship Sunday

Please join us on Sunday, February 13 at a service featuring Teen Challenge

Friendship Dinner immediately following worship

Sponsored by the Dorcas Circle

Please invite family and friends for this special worship service and dinner. A sign-up sheet has been posted for those attending and for those willing to provide help with the dinner.

MEN'S CLUB

Breakfast Meetings the 1st Saturday of each month.

February's Meeting: Mickey's Restaurant (the old Denny's)

Saturday, February 5th at 9:00 am.

Contact Russ Tilden at 231-798-1032 with questions.

Looking Ahead March

Diane Miller of Habitat for Humanity will be at DML on March 13 for a temple talk



PRAYER VENTURES

1 Give thanks for Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa, as they continue to reach out to the community through La Voz de Esperanza (The Voice of Hope) ministry and to lift up leaders.

2 Pray for Sarah and Pastor Peter Grow Hanson who serve in Yeumbuel, an outer-urban area of Dakar, Senegal. They provide leadership for programming at the House of Mutual Understanding, a youth and cultural center that provides library services and educational, handicraft, sports, and literacy programs.

3 Pray for Pastor Mulba Borsay and Calvary Lutheran Church, East Cleveland, Ohio, whose ministries are helping Liberian immigrants adjust to life in a new community and a new country.

4 Pray for the Rev. Jose Diaz-Rodriguez and La Sagrada Familia, a developing ministry in Phoenix, Arizona. This emerging congregation is a satellite ministry of La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona.

5 Give thanks for the tireless efforts of Pastor Daryl and Jane Schubert as they coordinate Theological Education by Extension in the East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Daryl works with 25 group leaders and 190 students in many locations.

6 Transfiguration of Our Lord
Blessed God, in the midst of serious political and economic challenges in the region, we pray for the people of Japan, North Korea, and South Korea, that your abundant grace may be showered upon them.

7 Pray for Pastor James and Nancy Bullock. James serves as pastor of St. Paul International Lutheran Church, Tokyo, Japan. Remember the Bullocks and the congregation as they minister to expatriates of many nationalities, as well as to English-speaking Japanese of the Tokyo metropolitan area.

8 Pray for Pastor Michael Fonner and Leslie Weed Fonner for their services as regional representatives for Asia-Pacific. Mike and Leslie live in Seoul, South Korea, where Mike serves the International Lutheran Church of Seoul and guides the ministry of this congregation. Remember all those who participate in this church's life and mission.

9 Ash Wednesday
Pray for all Christians, especially for members of ELCA congregations, as they begin their Lenten journey, that their passion for sharing the gospel may increase as they contemplate the love of God experienced through Jesus Christ.

10 Pray for Katie Narum as she teaches at Luther Junior and Senior High School in Kumamoto, Japan. Katie also assists with the school's International Center and provides music and English Bible study leadership in Kumamoto congregations of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

11 Pray for Pastor David Poling-Goldenne and New Song Lutheran Church, Henderson, Nevada, as the congregation moves toward the building process in the third fastest growing community in the United States.

12 Pray for Pastor Eric Campbell and the people of Augsburg Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Maryland, as they redevelop the congregation's ministry to be a "voice for the voiceless."

13 Lent 1
Lord of the nations, we pray for the people of Indonesia and the Philippines as they struggle with religious and political diversity. Grant that they may receive your peace and a sense of the richness of life that comes through your abounding gifts.

14 Give thanks for the ministries of Rosie and Daniel Kameo at Satya Wacana Christian University, Central Java, Indonesia. She teaches English, and he teaches economics and directs the graduate school. Pray also for the country of Indonesia, particularly for understanding between Christians and Muslims.

15 Give praise and thanks for Patricia Bentsen, a missionary nurse with SALFA, the health department of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Pray that Patricia and other SALFA personnel may serve as Christ's ambassadors, particularly in areas where health care is not taken for granted.

16 Give thanks for Pastors Jim and Judy Bangsund and their teaching ministry at Makumira University College, Tanzania. Pray for their continued effectiveness in preparing future pastors and teachers of the church. Jim teaches Old Testament and Judy teaches music and liturgy at this Lutheran seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

17 Give thanks for the Church of the Damascus Road, an ELCA prison ministry in Fort Dodge and Rockwell City, Iowa, and for the After Care programs that assist freed convicts in building new lives.

18 Pray for Pastor David and Nahoko Person as they serve in the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC). David is overseas secretary for the JELC in Tokyo,

works with the church's youth activities, and serves as coordinator of the JELC J-3 teachers program. He also assists with a local congregation in the areas of leading worship, preaching, and teaching.

19

Pray for Pastor Kevin Ruffcorn and Desert Streams Lutheran Church, an emerging congregation in Surprise, Arizona.

20

Lent 2

Loving God, we pray for the people of Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore, that they may be strengthened to meet the many challenges of a pluralistic world. We praise you for the companion relationship between the ELCA Southeastern Synod, the Lutheran Church in Singapore, and the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore.

21

Remember Robert Ovsak, Lucinda Morgan, and Stacey Sedgwick, all teaching English at teachers' colleges in the People's Republic of China under the auspices of the Amity Foundation. Pray for all Amity teachers from many countries who teach in small teacher-training colleges within China.

22

Pray that the Holy Spirit guides Spring Church Evangelical Lutheran Church in Spring Church, Pennsylvania, as they seek to grow through new worship opportunities and new ministries to families.

23

Pray for Jeff Truscott as he serves as lecturer in liturgy and theology at Trinity Theological College (TTC) in the Republic of Singapore. TTC is a multi-denominational seminary that trains candidates for ordination in the Lutheran Church of Singapore. Pray for all who serve with TTC and the Lutheran Church of Singapore.

24

Thank God for Pastor Russell Siler as he continues to serve as pastor of the Lutheran

Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem. Pray for peace in this city of peace and in this Holy Land.

25

Pray for the ELCA mission congregation Bridge of Life, in Holland Township, near Holmen, Wisconsin, and their mission developer, Pastor Steve A. Meyer.

26

Offer thanks for Pastor David Saylor and Hope Lutheran Church, Forest Hills, Pennsylvania. As their faith deepens through prayer and expanding outreach ministries, they become increasingly a place of hope.

27

Lent 3

God almighty, we praise you for the witness of the Church in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We ask that you continue to strengthen them as they reach out to increasingly diverse populations and to the world. We also thank you for the companion relationship shared by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the ELCA Delaware-Maryland Synod.

28

The International Church of Copenhagen (ICC) is known for its special interest in youth and young adult ministry. An ELCA intern, Gretchen Freese, leads an outreach to Danish college students. Give thanks for Gretchen, Pastor Timothy and Mary Ann Stewart, and the members of the ICC as they continue their English-language ministry in Copenhagen.

Prayer Ventures is available electronically. Visit us at www.elca.org

The Story of St. Valentine

In 270 A.D., marriage had been outlawed by the emperor of Rome, Claudius II. Claudius issued this decree because he thought that married men made bad soldiers since they were reluctant to be torn away from their families in the case of war. Claudius had also outlawed Christianity in this time period because he wished to be praised as the one supreme god, the Emperor of Rome. Valentine was the bishop of Interamna during this period of oppression. Valentine thought that the decrees of Rome were wrong. He believed that people should be free to love God and to marry. Valentine invited the young couples of the area to come to him. When they came, Valentine secretly performed services of matrimony and united the couples.

Valentine was eventually caught and was brought before the emperor. The emperor saw that Valentine had conviction and drive that was unsurpassed among his men. Claudius tried and tried to persuade Valentine to leave Christianity, serve the Roman empire and the Roman gods. In exchange, Claudius would pardon him and make him one of his allies. St. Valentine held to his faith and did not renounce Christ. Because of this, the emperor sentenced him to a three-part execution. First, Valentine would be beaten, then stoned, and then finally, decapitated. Valentine died on February 14th, 270 A.D.

While in prison, waiting for his sentence to be carried out, Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter, the blind Asterius. During the course of Valentine's prison stay, a miracle occurred and Asterius regained her sight. Valentine sent her a final farewell note. He signed his last note, "From Your Valentine." Even today, this message remains as the motto for our Valentine's Day celebrations.

Calendar Observances—February 2005

Wednesday, February 2

The Presentation of Our Lord

Forty days after the birth of Christ we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There in the temple, a prophet named Anna began to speak of the redemption of Israel when she saw the young child. Simeon also greeted Mary and Joseph. He responded to the presence of the consolation of Israel in this child with the words of the Nunc dimittis. His song described Jesus as a "light for the nations."

Because of the link between Jesus as the light for the nations, and because an old reading for this festival contains a line from the prophet Zephaniah, "I will search Jerusalem with candles," the day is also known as Candlemas, a day when candles are blessed for the coming year. If no service is planned to celebrate this day in the congregation, be sure to read the story about the presentation when congregational groups meet and include a setting of the Song of Simeon (such as LBW 339 or 349).

Thursday, February 3

Ansgar, Archbishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, 865

A traditional emphasis during the weeks of Epiphany has been the mission of the church. Ansgar was a monk who led a mission to Denmark and then later to Sweden, where he built the first church. His work ran into difficulties with the rulers of

the day, and he was forced to withdraw into Germany, where he served as a bishop in Hamburg. Despite his difficulties in Sweden, he persisted in his mission work and later helped consecrate Gothbert as the first bishop of Sweden. Ansgar also had a deep love for the poor. He would wash their feet and serve them food provided by the parish.

Ansgar is particularly honored by Scandinavian Lutherans. The Church of Sweden honors him as an apostle. His persistence in mission and his care for the poor invite congregations to reflect on their own ministry of bearing the light of Christ during the days of Epiphany.

Saturday, February 5

The Martyrs of Japan, 1597

In the sixteenth century, Jesuit missionaries, followed by Franciscans, introduced the Christian faith in Japan. But a promising beginning to those missions--there were perhaps as many as 300,000 Christians by the end of the sixteenth century--met complications from competition between the missionary groups, political difficulty between Spain and Portugal, and factions within the government of Japan. Christianity was suppressed. By 1630, Christianity was driven underground.

Today we commemorate the first martyrs of Japan, twenty-six missionaries and converts, who were killed by crucifixion. Two hundred and fifty years later, when Christian missionaries returned to Japan, they found a community of Japanese Christians that had sur-

vived underground. The Martyrs of Japan are a somber reminder of the cost of Christianity and discipleship. Their witness invites us to pray for the church's own witness to the gospel and encourages us to trust that the church is sustained in times of persecution.

Monday, February 14

Cyril, monk, 869; Methodius, bishop, 885; missionaries to the Slavs

These two brothers from a noble family in Thessalonika in northeastern Greece were priests and missionaries. After some early initial missionary work by Cyril among the Arabs, the brothers retired to a monastery. They were later sent to work among the Slavs, the missionary work for which they are most known. Since Slavonic had no written form at the time, the brothers established a written language with the Greek alphabet as its basis. They translated the scriptures and the liturgy using this Cyrillic alphabet. The Czechs, Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, and Bulgars regard the brothers as the founders of Slavic literature. The brothers' work in preaching and worshiping in the language of the people are honored by Christians in both East and West.

Friday, February 18

Martin Luther, renewer of the church, 1546

For those in the habit of remembering the work of Martin Luther on Reformation Day, this commemoration may seem out of place. But it is a custom to remember saints on the day of their death,

their "heavenly birthday." On this day Luther died at the age of 62. For a time, he was an Augustinian monk, but it is his work as a biblical scholar, translator of the Bible, reformer of the liturgy, theologian, educator, and father of German vernacular literature, which holds him in our remembrance. In Luther's own judgment, the greatest of all of his works was his catechism written to instruct people in the basics of faith. And it was his baptism that sustained him in his trials as a reformer.

Sunday, February 20
Rasmus Jensen, the first Lutheran pastor in North America, 1620

Jensen came to North America in 1619 with an expedition sent by King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway. The expedition took possession of the Hudson Bay area, naming it Nova Dania. Within months of their arrival, most of the members of the expedition died, including Jensen. After this expedition, much Danish missionary activity was concentrated in India and the Virgin Islands.

Today would be an appropriate time to give thanks for the church in Canada, which flourished even after its early struggles. It would also be an opportunity to pray for missionaries who face difficulty in their tasks.

Wednesday, February 23
Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156

Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna and a link between the apostolic age and the church at the end of the second century. He

is said to have known John, the author of Revelation. In turn he was known by Iranaeus, bishop of Lyon in France, and Ignatius of Antioch. At the age of eighty-six, Polycarp was martyred for his faith. When urged to save his life and renounce his faith, he replied, "Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who saved me?" The magistrate who made the offer was reluctant to kill a gentle old man, but he had no choice. Polycarp was burned at the stake.

Polycarp's life and death provide an eloquent illustration of Paul's words about suffering and endurance in the second reading for next Sunday.

Wednesday, February 23
Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, missionary to India, 1719

Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg was a missionary to the Tamils of Tranquebar on the southeast coast of India. The first convert to Christianity was baptized about ten months after Ziegenbalg began preaching. His missionary work was opposed both by the local Hindus and also by Danish authorities in that same area. Ziegenbalg was imprisoned for his work on a charge of converting the natives. The Copenhagen Mission Society that opposed him wanted an indigenous church that did not reflect European patterns or show concern for matters other than the gospel. Ziegenbalg, in contrast, argued that concern for the welfare of others is a matter of the gospel. Today, the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church carries on his work.

Ziegenbalg's missionary work can inspire us in our Lenten jour-

ney with the reminder that we are called to live in service to others.

Thursday, February 24
St. Matthias, Apostle

After Christ's ascension, the apostles met in Jerusalem to choose a replacement for Judas. Matthias was chosen over Joseph Justus by the casting of lots. Little is known about Matthias, and little is reported about him in the account of his election in Acts 1:15-26. Matthias had traveled among the disciples from the time of Jesus' baptism until his ascension. His task, after he was enrolled among the eleven remaining disciples, was to bear witness to the resurrection.

During the weeks of Lent, congregations with catechumens will have a chance to learn stories of how people have been called, some in unusual ways like Matthias.

Friday, February 25
Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, 1921

Fedde was born in Norway and trained as a deaconess. In 1882, at the age of thirty-two, she was asked to come to New York to minister to the poor and to Norwegian seamen. Her influence was wide ranging, and she established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn and the Deaconess House and Hospital of the Lutheran Free Church in Minneapolis. She returned home to Norway in 1895 and died there.

Fedde was an example of selfless service to those in need. How does your congregation reach out to those who are sick, in need, or forgotten? Perhaps ways to reach out that have been overlooked can easily be incorporated in your congregation's ministry.

From Our Members

There is a new airline in Minnesota for Lutherans and those that want to be—Lutran Air

Ya, shure, ya betcha! Dis is da latest air service to sprout up in Minnysota. Also serving Visconsin, Nort and Sout Dakota and Montana.

If you are travelin soon, consider Lutran Air, da no-frills airline You're all in da same boat on Lutran Air, where flyin is an upliftin experience. Dere is no first class on any Lutran Air flight.

Meals are potluck. Rows 1-6, bring rolls; 7-15, bring a salad; 16-21, a main dish, and 22-30, a dessert. Basses and tenors please sit in da rear of da aircraft.

Everyone is responsible for his or her own baggage. All fares are by freewill offering and da plane will not land 'til da budget is met.

Pay attention to your flight attendant who will acquaint you with da safety system aboard dis Lutran Air 599.

Okay den, listen up. I'm only gonna say dis once. In de event of a sudden loss of

cabin pressure, I am frankly going to be real surprised and so will Captain Olson, because we fly right around two thousand feet, so loss of cabin pressure would probably indicate da Second Coming or someting of dat nature, and I wouldn't bodar with doze little masks on da rubber tubes. You're gonna have bigger tings to worry about than dat. Yust stuff doze back up in dair little holes. Probably da masks fell out because of turbulence which, to be honest wit you, we're going to have quite a bit of at two thousand feet .. sort a like driving across a plowed field, but after a while you get used to it. In de event of a water landing, I'd say forget it. Start saying da Lord's Prayer and just hope you get to da part about forgive us our sins as we forgive doze who sin against us, which some people say "trespass against us," which isn't right, but what can you do?

De use of cell phones on da plane is strictly forbidden, not because day may interfere with da plane's navigational system, which is seat of da pants all da way. No, it's because cell phones are a pain in da wazoo, and if God meant you to use a cell phone, He woulda put your mout on da side of your head.

We're going to start lunch right about noon and it's buffet style with da coffee pot up front. Den we'll have da hymn sing; hymnals are in da seat pocket in front of you. Don't take yours wit you when you go or I am going to be real upset and I am not kiddin!

Right now I'll say Grace. "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let deze gifts to us be blessed. Fadar, Son, and Holy Ghost, may we land in Dulut or pretty close Amen!

Submitted by Betty Proksa

A pastor once stated, "I always noticed that its was the adults who chose the children's hymn 'Jesus Loves Me' (for the children of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best."

Here is a new version just for us who have white hair, or no hair at all. For us over 40 (or even those almost there) and all you others... Check out this newest version of "Jesus Loves Me". It is quite cute, so read, sing and enjoy:"

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow.
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

(CHORUS)

YES, JESUS LOVES ME... YES,
JESUS LOVES ME...
YES, JESUS LOVES ME FOR THE
BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go.
On through life, let come what
may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

(CHORUS)

Though I am no longer young,
I have much which He's begun.
Let me serve Christ with a smile,
Go with others the extra mile.

(CHORUS)

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear, for I am near."

(CHORUS)

When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above,
Then I'll understand His love.

(CHORUS)

I love Jesus, does he know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say,
That I love Him every day.

Submitted by LaVern Borreson

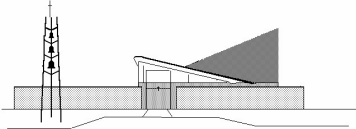
February 2005

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7 pm Finance Committee	2 7 pm Property Committee <i>The Presentation of Our Lord</i>	3 2 pm & 7 pm Bible Study <i>Ansgar, Archbishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden. 865</i>	4	5 9 am Men's Club Breakfast @ Mickey's <i>The Martyrs of Japan, 1597</i>
6 4th Sunday after the Epiphany 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Holy Eucharist 11 am BIBLE Club	7 10 am Dorcas Circle 6:30 pm Parish Education Committee	8 6:30 Eve Circle	9 Ash Wednesday 7:00 Ash Wednesday Service	10 2 pm & 7 pm Bible Study	11	12
13 1st Sunday in Lent Friendship Sunday 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Holy Eucharist 11 am BIBLE Club 12 pm Friendship Dinner	14 6:30 pm Congregation Council <i>Cyril, monk, 869; Methodius, bishop, 885; missionaries to the Slavs</i>	15	16	17 2 pm & 7 pm Bible Study	18 <i>Martin Luther, renewer of the church, 1546</i>	19 10 am Worship & Music Committee
20 2nd Sunday in Lent 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Holy Eucharist 11 am BIBLE Club <i>Rasmus Jensen, the first Lutheran pastor in North America, 1620</i>	21	22	23 <i>Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156 Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, missionary to India, 1719</i>	24 2 pm & 7 pm Bible Study <i>ST. MATTHIAS, APOSTLE</i>	25 <i>Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, 1921</i>	26 9 am Mutual Ministry Committee @ Nino's
27 3rd Sunday in Lent 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Holy Eucharist 11 am BIBLE Club	28 6:30 pm Evangelism Committee					

**Dr. Martin Luther
Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1480 East Hile Road
Muskegon, Michigan 49444

Phone: 231-739-0680
Www.dmlc.org
Email: newsletter@dmlc.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

We're on the Web!
www.dml.com

The Church Door

*The Newsletter of Dr. Martin Luther Evan-
gelical Lutheran Church*

February 2005

Dr. Martin Luther Ev. Lutheran Church
1860 E. Hile Rd.
Muskegon, MI 49444

THE CHURCH DOOR
February 2005
The Seasons of Epiphany & Lent

