



GLAD TIDINGS



Vol. 28, Iss. 10 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, MD Dec 2009 / Jan 2010

Advent

On the first three Wednesdays in Advent (December 2, 9, & 16) we will have soup suppers and Holden Evening Vespers, a hopeful, gentle service of song and prayer. Pastor Steve will present highlights from his sabbatical journey following these services. This is a great time to invite friends to church!

Advent Soup Supper - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Wednesdays: Dec. 2 & Dec. 9 & Dec. 16
Dinner: 6:30 pm
Vespers: 7:30 pm

We need people to: 1) prepare soups (use your own recipe), 2) bake brownies, cookies, cookie bars, and 3) clean up. You may volunteer for any of the three. Please sign up in the narthex or contact Lesa Sullivan at 301-330-3686; stevesullivan@comcast.net.

Christmas Pageant



Dress Rehearsal (audience welcome) will be Friday, December 11, at 6:00 pm.

The Pageant will be performed at 6:00 pm on December 12.

Please join us!

Living Nativity

Our annual Living Nativity will be coordinated by Bridget Pavlak. Show your PoP spirit by (at least) driving by the Live Nativity and honking and waving! You may also "drop by" to provide moral support to the Live Nativity actors. Or share a cup of hot coffee or hot chocolate with the actors. Please sign up in the Narthex.

Sunday December 20 through Wednesday December 23, 5:30-6:45 pm

Christmas Worship

Please join us for Worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day!

Christmas Eve services:

5 pm - Children's service;

7 & 10 pm - Carols and Holy Communion

Christmas Day:

10 am - Carols and Holy Communion

Saturday, December 26 - no 5:00 pm service
Sunday, December 27 - Worship at 8:30 am & 11 am; no Sunday School on December 27

December & January Highlights

Every Sunday

8:30 am Contemporary Worship

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Traditional Worship

Baby-sitter available during Services

Every Tuesday

10:00 am Quilters

Every Wednesday

8:45 am Prayer Time in the Sanctuary

12:00 pm Bible Study with Pastor Steve

5:30 pm High School Youth Group

7:30 pm Adult Choir

Every Thursday

5:00 pm Youth Choir

7:30 pm Grace Notes

7:30 pm Bible Study with Pastor Sarah

Every Saturday

7:45 am Men's Group

5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship



From Pastor Steve...

Pastor Steven Buechler
(pastor@poplutheran.org;
301-869-3666)

It's great to be back with all of you here at Prince of Peace, although I did enjoy my sabbatical immensely, and it was a great time of learning and reflection for me. I know that many of you got a chance to follow my journeys through my blog, and if you didn't - or you got behind - don't worry! The blog will be up for quite a while yet.

Journeying through many important biblical sites during my sabbatical helped me to learn a great deal about the people, the cultures, and the times in which many biblical events occurred. But even more than that, simply being in many of these places gave me a sense of perspective. I realized again that having perspective is more than simply the sum of knowing facts about a place or the story of a people. Perspective comes, in some sense, from standing in the same place as your neighbor - even your neighbor from centuries ago - and catching a glimpse of the world from their point of view.

Perspective is important, because it helps you to see things from a different angle. It helps you to understand things in a different way. It helps you to appreciate why things that might seem trivial to you are so important to others. And when you gain a little bit more perspective, you'll never hear or experience things in quite the same way again. This was really reinforced to me on the first Sunday I was back, as I listened to Pastor Sarah read the Gospel lesson about Jesus meeting Mary and Martha and going to the tomb of Lazarus. About two weeks prior, my group had visited the place where traditionally, Jesus met Mary and Martha. We had read the story there, and visited nearby tombs like the one in which Lazarus was laid. And while that experience didn't give me any new information I didn't have before, it did give me the sense of being in the real place where real people experienced the real presence of the living God. The story for me was no longer about people and places "long ago and far away." Instead, I had a sense of God acting in

the real world as Pastor Sarah read the story. I felt myself standing in the actual place. And I knew then that because of the perspective I'd gained on my trip, I will never again be able to read the Bible in the same way as I did before.

And Biblical perspective is important, not only because it helps you to gain insight into the people and places of the Bible, but because it helps you to gain insight into God and what God was and is doing in the world. That perspective can be gained in lots of ways, and often comes through experiences of worship, studying and serving in Jesus' name. As part of my way of sharing the perspective I've gained, I'll be sharing photos and stories after each of the Holden Evening Prayer services during Advent. For the first three Wednesday evenings in Advent, December 2, 9, & 16, we'll gather for dinner at 6:30 pm, Evening Prayer at 7:30 pm, and then for a presentation I'll be leading at 8 pm. Of course, I'll be talking about these experiences and sharing them for the rest of my life, but these evenings in Advent will be a special time to share my perspective and experiences. I hope many of you will come, and that you'll feel free to bring friends and neighbors as well!

Yours in Christ,



You Made a Difference in October at PoP

- Average Weekend Worship Attendance: 171
- Our Cookie Brigade "cookied" 2 first-time visitor households!

Financial Snapshot

Giving & Spending Update:

| October 2009: | | Year to Date: | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Actual | | Actual | |
| Income | \$ 30,200.00 | Income | \$326,028.00 |
| Actual | | Actual | |
| Expenses | \$ 40,035.00 | Expenses | \$360,224.00 |
| Budgeted | | Budgeted | |
| Expenses | \$ 37,709.66 | Expenses | \$377,096.60 |
| Actual | | Actual | |
| Difference | \$ - 9,935.00 | Difference | \$ -34,196.00 |

(Note: This reflects actual income and expenses towards our approved budget. It does not include income and expenses for special funds, such as Workcamp and Building Fund.)

So far in 2009, our giving has increased from last year and our projected spending will probably only be about 94% of our budget. However, we still have a \$34K deficit at the end of October. So, all the Council members and the pastors committed to making an additional gift of \$200 before the end of 2009 to ensure that we have sufficient funds for our vibrant and important ministries. **We are asking each and every household in the congregation to join us in this effort by making an additional gift of \$200 to Prince of Peace.** If we all participate in this effort, we will ensure that we can continue to focus on mission and not get distracted by deficits. Any gift you can make is needed and appreciated!

Council Corner

The PoP Church Council met on November 10 in a regular monthly meeting. This article describes highlights of that meeting. For more details see the meeting minutes posted on the bulletin board in the church Narthex near the front door. Council decided to start a blog, so these notes and the opportunity to comment will be available in the near future at <http://council.blogs.poplutheran.org>.

Pastor Steve, fresh back from his sabbatical, gave us a brief view of life in Jerusalem for the only Christian merchant left on his street. The man faithfully opens his blue-shuttered door every day as a witness to his faith in a decidedly unfriendly location.

The Treasurer's Report for October showed that operating expenses exceeded income by \$9835 for the month. So we are continuing our monthly

deficit. This increased the operating deficit YTD to about \$34,200. This situation was the main topic of discussion for most of the meeting - much more below.

Pastor Sarah reported on her participation at two conferences she attended during the month. One conference was the "First Call Conference" of pastors in their first call. Pastor Sarah presented a workshop on "greening the church" which is a topic and ministry in which PoP has developed a significant reputation. The second, the Lewis Fellows Conference in Kansas City, was centered on the topic of stewardship. Her main take-aways were that growing churches have a very clear purpose, that people give "through" not "to" the church and that there is always a dedicated core of people that do most of the work.

There was discussion about the Building Committee's mission in this time of economic uncertainty and budget deficits. The Council directed that the Building Committee continue with the surveys and present the results at the next Congregation meeting in February 2010 and that the Building Committee should still be in "visioning mode" throughout 2010 with no plans for any immediate capital projects or campaigns.

We spent time reviewing the results of the Congregation Meeting of November 8. There were about 38 members in attendance, not enough for a quorum. Since the purpose of the meeting was informational, this was not a problem, although more participation would have been beneficial. Some of the response received after Council's presentation of our current financial status included questions about: Where does the money all go anyway? What is the cost per student in our Sunday School? Can we cut our Synod Proportional Share? Council discussed various budget-balancing strategies including having a fall fundraiser, developing a "Narrative Budget" which more clearly explains how money is spent on our various ministries, rather than the usual spreadsheet line item format which is hard for some people to understand. We also listened to an idea from David for a "Low Water Mark" constitutional amendment which would require that we must always maintain 2-3 months of operating funds in the bank (about \$100,000 in our case). We are a little bit better than this right now, but not much. No action was taken on this idea.

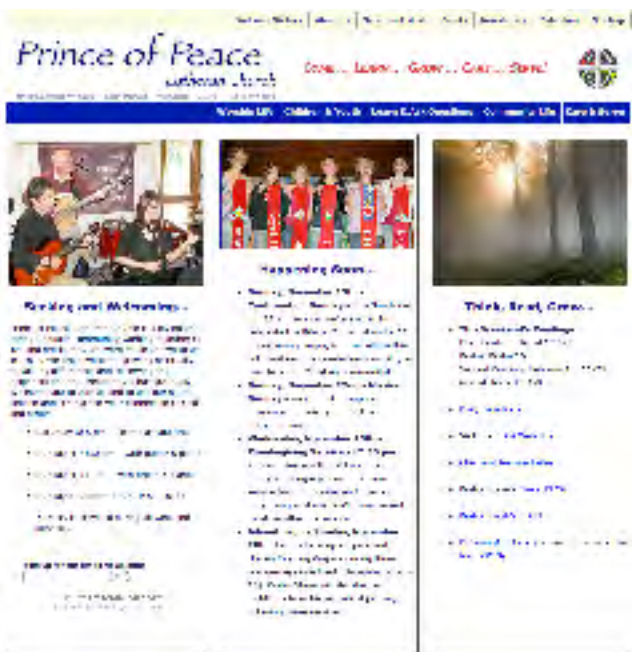
Pastor Steve presented a plan to help us do our best to recover from the deficit in 2009. The plan involves deciding on a specific and doable goal on a household basis, a short letter to the congregation from Pastor Steve and David Yaney, Church Council and other leaders calling each of the 183 families in our congregation, brief notices in the weekly email and bulletin, two short Temple Talks sponsored by Youth and our Puppet Ministry, and a personal letter from Pastor Steve to the top 25% of our largest givers. The Council voted to go with this plan and begin implementing it immediately. We have a lot of work to do in the next two months!

If you would like to join in and see firsthand what goes on at a PoP Church Council meeting, please come! We meet in the Fellowship Hall from 7:30-9:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

- These notes were written by Neil Howard, nhoward@comcast.net.

New Prince of Peace Website Goes Live!

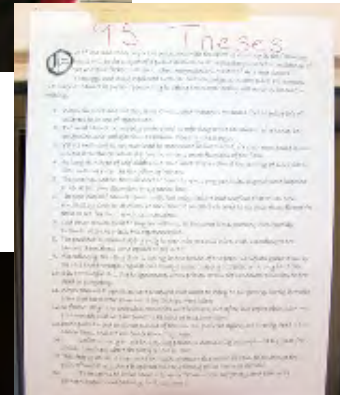
In late October, PoP rolled out a new website with a new look and new features. The new website, developed by the PoP Web Team, is designed to reach out to folks looking for a faith community and to also serve PoP members. If you haven't checked out the new design please do so at www.poplutheran.org! And keep watching as the Web Team updates and expands the website.



Recent Events

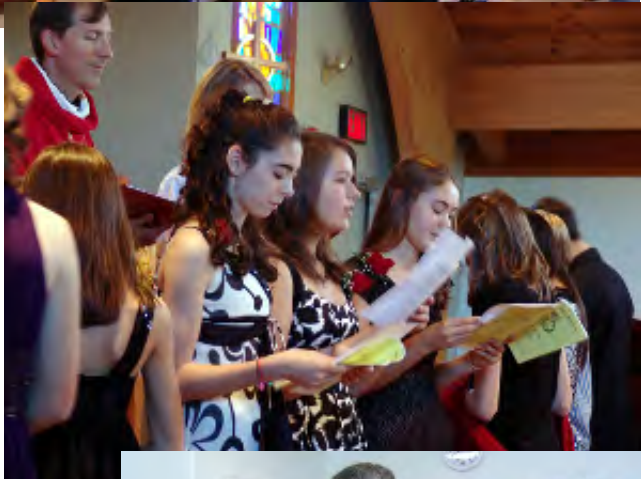


Reformation Sunday





Confirmation Sunday



Stewardship

Creation Care

Green Neighborhood Effect
Talk about a Win - Win - Win!

Want to take a positive yet simple step in the stewardship of God's Earth? Want to support Creation Care projects at Prince of Peace? And, want to save money, too?



You can do all three!
PoP is partnering with Clean Currents in the Green Neighborhood Effect Challenge.

Who is "Clean Currents"?

Clean Currents is based in Rockville and is marketing greener types of power for your home. Prince of Peace switched to Clean Currents a few months ago and as a result we're saving on the church's electric bill. Their service, called "Wind Power for Home," is a new carbon neutral electricity option for people in the Maryland and Washington, D.C. area. Wind Power for Home

combines standard electricity from the Mid-Atlantic grid (the PJM grid) with Renewable Energy Credits (“RECs” or “green tags”) from wind power farms situated across the U.S., bundled together and supplied by Washington Gas Energy Services. This bundled wind energy product helps fight global warming by offsetting the carbon emissions from your electricity use with clean, renewable wind power.

The really good news is that right now, Clean Currents Wind Power for Home rates for Maryland and DC are **lower** than Pepco and BGE’s rates by comparison!

All you need to do to switch to their service is to go to their website, www.CleanCurrents.com and be sure to mention Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. There is a Wind Power for Home signup page and the only potential challenge is to enter your Pepco or BGE account number. You can get this from your Pepco or BGE monthly statement. If you don’t know your account number, you can find out by calling Pepco at 202-833-7500 or BGE at 1-800-685-0123.

Clean Currents Wind Power for Home rates cover all Generation and Transmission charges. The rate is the same at all times for the length of your contract. Power distribution is still a regulated market (you do not have a choice). Your Wind Power for Home distribution charges will stay with the utility in your area (Pepco or BGE). Your utility is still responsible for the reliability of your power, power line maintenance, and billing.



Clean Currents has challenged us to switch to clean power as a community. It’s called the Green Neighborhood Effect Challenge! For every household in our faith and greater community that enrolls between now and the end of March, they will give **\$10 to our Prince of Peace Lutheran Church faith community** to do a greening project of our choice. Whether we do a tree planting, or enhance our community garden - they want to help us green our community as a thank you for greening our electricity and saving money. Tell your friends, tell your neighbors, tell your relatives at Holiday gatherings! Kickoff is Wednesday, November 25 and the program will last until the end of March 2010. But why wait - the sooner you make the switch, the sooner you’ll save money on your electric bill. Let’s rock this

challenge, save money, and green our community!

It’s all at www.CleanCurrents.com



Mission Statement

Our mission statement is “As we are called by God to be stewards of creation, the Creation Care Team shall promote appreciation, conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources in all aspects of congregational life and in the outside community through:

- a. Contemplation, prayer, and worship;
- b. Designing and implementing environmental education programs and activities;
- c. Regularly assessing and promoting practices that reduce the environmental footprint of our church;
- d. Advocating for environmental stewardship in the wider community.”

The Creation Care Team has now set the first Saturday of each month from 9 - 10:30 am as a regular meeting time. Our next meeting is Saturday, December 5. Please feel free to join us if you are interested in helping out or even just want to see what is going on. Contact Pastor Sarah for more information at pastorsarah@poplutheran.org.

Fellowship

Lesa Sullivan (lesasullivan@comcast.net; 301-330-3686)

Tables for All

We’re in full swing with over 40 people signed up, but it’s not too late to be an alternate and be called if the host needs someone to fill in if someone can’t make it. A big thank you to Becky Carr for coordinating this Fellowship event.



Church Christmas Party

Everyone is invited to the home of Dick and Sandy Moore for the annual Appetizer and

Dessert party on Saturday, December 5. Check

the bulletin for more details or call the Moores for more information.

Dishes for the Church

Please consider donating to the church restricted fund to buy new dishes for the church kitchen.



These dishes are used so many times during the year for soup suppers, pot lucks, and receptions. We would like to have a set of washable,

durable dishes to use but we need to raise the money for them first. To donate, please drop your check in the collection plate for any amount you can, marked "wish list - dishes."

Save the Date: January 30, 2010

French Gourmet Cuisine & Fellowship

Our January 2010 Fellowship Gourmet Dinner Event will be French cuisine as inspired by Julia Child. After the first of the year, please look for a sign-up sheet and recipes in the Narthex.



Wendy Dinova-Wimmer will research, taste test, and provide the French recipes. Dean and Joanne Wolfe will host the event at their home in Darnestown (3 miles from the church) on Saturday, January 30 at 6:30pm. Info? Please contact Wendy at wadw@comcast.net.

Interested in Fellowship?

Everyone is welcome to attend the monthly Fellowship meetings which are held at the church the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30. For more information, please call Lesa Sullivan at 301-330-3686.

High School Youth Ministry

Workcamp 2010

Sign up for Workcamp in Mifflinburg, PA is still open for a few more spots. Please email or call Joanne Wolfe at 301-926-3093; joannewolfe@comcast.net. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SIGNED UP AND HAVE NOT TURNED IN YOUR DEPOSIT OF \$50, IT IS DUE NOW!!

Watch for emails and updates on pre-camp meetings and mulching fundraisers that will start after the first of the year.

Mifflinburg, PA

July 10 - 17, 2010

Entering 9th grade in Fall 2010 (ages 14+)

Cost: \$525



Thanks!

Youth Ministry

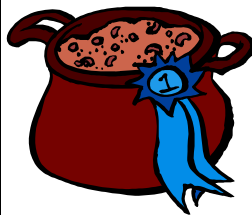
December 3: Faith-full families will be held December 3 from 6:00-7:30 pm. This is an event for families with children of preschool age through 5th grade, and their older siblings. We will start with a potluck dinner and conversation, followed by crafts and then end in the sanctuary with a bible story and prayer. Please join us.

December 18: Jesus' Birthday Party & Parents' Night Out

We are hosting a Birthday Party for Baby Jesus on December 18 from 6:00-9:00pm. This is a celebration of Jesus' birth and our annual Christmas party for elementary age children. We will have pizza, crafts, games, snacks, and a birthday cake. Children will be entertained by middle/high school youth and adult sponsors. Sign-up in the narthex.



January 23, 2010: Join us for the Second Annual PoP Chili Cook-off on January 23 at 6:00 pm. High school youth are



sponsoring this event to raise money for Work Camp 2010. Please join us for a great night of food and fellowship and bring your chili, cornbread, or dessert to enter in the cook-off contest.

For more information, please contact Tam Harbert, tharbert@comcast.net or Lisa Woodard, woodard4@comcast.net.

January 30, 2010: We will be hosting a Parent's Night Out for our young PoP kids (pre-school age through 5th grade) on January 30 from 6-9:00 pm. We invite children to join us for pizza, crafts, and a movie while you enjoy an evening out. Children will be entertained by middle/high school youth and adult sponsors. For more information, please contact April Pawlowski, pawlowskiski@hotmail.com.

Social Ministries

Jennifer Maloney (maloney.jenn@gmail.com; 301-602-6358)

Remembering Others During Advent

Make a child's Christmas special: Social Ministry is sponsoring *The Giving Tree*; through the City of Gaithersburg and its annual Secret Santa, PoP members can provide gifts for children whose families are unable to provide a Christmas. Look for the Giving Tree in the narthex; each child has tags for four gifts, two toys and two clothing items. You may provide one or as many of the gifts as you choose. Last year, PoP provided gifts for nearly 40 children. The Giving Tree will be up on November 21. **All gifts need to be returned to Prince of Peace by Sunday, December 13.**

The confirmation students will wrap the gifts for delivery. For information, contact Kathy Rossmeisl, klrossme@verizon.net; 301-738-6592.



Alternative Giving Provides Gifts of Hope

Gifts of Hope is an alternative gift program in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod.

Traditional gift giving involves buying an item and giving it to a relative or friend. Alternative giving differs in that it involves buying a symbol of a gift and giving the symbol to someone. The actual item goes to someone who needs the gift. For example, traditionally, you might buy a new sweater or coffee table book for a relative; alternatively, think about a Christmas card that tells your relative that new sheets and pillowcases have been made available to homeless women in D.C. or that bread and milk have been provided to abandoned children in El Salvador. You will receive a Christmas card with a description of each gift that you choose. Please visit this link for gift ideas:

<http://metrodcelca.org/for-partners/local-ministry-resources/gifts-of-hope/>.

The Gifts of Hope "market" opens November 28 and runs through December 20th before and after services in the narthex. For more information, please contact Ellen Michael at rodandellen@comcast.net; 301-947-8433.

Adopted Family

Each year, PoP adopts a family as part of the *Holiday Giving Project* organized by Interfaith

Works, providing groceries for Thanksgiving and Christmas and gifts for the family. Peg Welborn coordinates this project.

The Holiday Giving Project helps low-income families in our community by collecting and distributing gifts and food during Thanksgiving and the December Holidays. With the help of individuals and groups, Interfaith Works is able to provide holiday meals, holiday baskets, gift cards, toys, etc. **Last year 9,000 families received assistance so they too could celebrate the holidays.** Please visit www.iworksmc.org for more information on how you can help.

Ongoing Projects

Don't forget the backdoor ministries during the holidays! Drop off boxes of cereal, pasta, sauce, tuna, and other donations for Gaithersburg HELP! We also collect old cell phones (which are given to people at risk for domestic violence), cancelled stamps (for the National Lutheran Home), Campbell's soup labels (actually only the UPC code, which go to the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission) and hotel-size toiletries (for shelter residents).

Coming Up in January and February

Fighting Hunger Around the World and in our Community

Start saving your coins for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal! We start off the New Year with our annual coin collection for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Last year, we collected 1,518 quarters, 4,497 pennies, 1,847 dimes, dollars and checks to send over \$1,200 to support the ELCA efforts to end hunger through relief, development, education, and advocacy.

Celebrate Souper Bowl Sunday two ways! Watch the game and support the

Souper Bowl of Caring by

bringing canned soup and beef stew, which helps replenish supplies at Gaithersburg HELP!



Refuge in Times of Trouble

If you know someone who is sick, in the hospital, or in need that is a member of the congregation, please let us know! The Social Ministries

Committee can offer services such as food, cards, or other specific needs. We can't help if we don't know. Contact Pastor Sarah Scherschligt at 301-869-3666 or at pastorsarah@poplutheran.org if you need help or know of someone who does.

Join the Team!

Want to become a part of the Social Ministries Team? The next meeting is Wednesday November 11 at 7:30pm. Contact Jennifer Maloney at Maloney.jenn@gmail.com; 301-602-6358 with questions or for more information.



For Women Only

Women's Luncheon

December 7: Please join us for lunch at Cosi in the Kentlands at 11:30.

Women's Book Group

Do you ever read a book and just need to talk about it? Well, the PoP Women's Book Group is the place. The group meets monthly on the second Thursday of the month; you are welcome to join for one meeting or for all. Members take turns hosting the gatherings. For more information, please contact Jennifer Maloney at Maloney.jenn@gmail.com or 301-602-6358.



Jamie Pflasterer, Nancy Wolejsza, and Remi Langum at Women's Book Group Annual Christmas Gathering, 2008

December 10: The group will hold its annual Christmas gathering at the home of Susan Victor, 14717 Pebble Hill Lane, Gaithersburg on Thursday, December 10, at 7:30 pm. The group

will discuss *Christ the Lord Rode to Cana* by Anne Rice. "From the opening pages of this book, there are layers of meaning and beauty. . . Rice, through Yeshua's [Jesus] eyes, lets us in for peeks at the heart of God, as it relates to the human struggle. This culminates in Yeshua's face-off with Satan in the wilderness, during forty days of fasting - a masterpiece of textured prose - and in the following incident with Mary of Magdala. From there, Rice shifts her story from conflict into beauty, as Yeshua verbalizes his purpose to his new followers and his family." (reviewed by Eric Wilson on Amazon.com). The evening ends with a book exchange so the reading continues into 2010. RSVP to Susan at 301-294-6883; susan.victor@worldnet.att.net.



Pat Juhrs, Susan Victor, June Herron, and Jennifer Maloney at Women's Book Group Christmas Gathering, 2008

January 14: Book Group starts the New Year at 7:30 pm on Thursday, January 14, 2010, at the home of Jennifer Maloney, 17804 Chorlee Court, Gaithersburg. The group will discuss Julia Child's memoir, *My Life in France*.

Future Dates:

Thursday, February 11: *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, hosted by Karen Kimmel-Miltzer

Thursday, March 11: *A Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks, hosted by Judy Bruening



Special Dates

- AIDS Awareness Day, December 1
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7
- First Day of Winter, December 21
- Christmas Day, December 25
- New Year's Eve, December 31
- Epiphany, January 6
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 18



A Little Extra Something

- Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is.

—Arthur F. Lenihan

- I complained because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.

—Indian proverb

- If someone were to pay 10 cents for every kind word you ever spoke and collect five cents for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor?

—Anonymous

- It takes two to speak the truth: one to speak and another to hear.

—Henry David Thoreau

- Worry is wasting today's time cluttering up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles.

—Anonymous

A Review from the Pew

If the humblest church or chapel is a House of God, then I spent two hours in the “Big House,” the Washington National Cathedral, on October 25, Reformation Sunday. Although a Protestant, I had nothing to protest about the timing of the Lutheran Reformation Service: the Redskins weren't playing until Monday night.

The soaring grandeur of the setting was matched by the uplifting voices of the Lenoir-Rhyne University *a cappella* choir. The music was in German, the words were in English. Alright, the music had German composers.

Rev. Richard Graham, Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, was a welcoming and well-in-charge host of the event. In the spirit of ecumenism, Dr. Diefenthaler, President of the Southeastern District (which includes the Washington area) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, offered words of welcome - and warning.

The preacher was Rev. Dr. Gemetchus Desta Buba, an African Lutheran, whose message was strong and riveting; to wit: the effective weapons of Lutheranism, now as in the time of the Reformation, are (1) the Word of God, (2) a mobilized laity, and (3) the power of prayer. We'd best heed Dr. Buba's advice - there are more Lutherans in Africa than in North America, South America, and Asia combined.



Distinguished speakers, lectors, and *a cappella* singers notwithstanding, the high point of the worship service were the anthems sung by the choir of the Oromo Evangelical Church. The harmonizing, accompanied with swaying, clapping, and “whooping” by the choir as well as Oromo members in the audience was infectious. I attempted to join in, but then sensing apprehension among my pew mates, limited myself to foot tapping.

The energy level remained high during the Rite of Organization and Reception of the Oromo

Evangelical Church of Washington into membership in the ELCA and our Metro Synod. The Oromos are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia (where there are 5.6 million Lutherans) and speak Afaan Oromo. Just as the Reformation breathed new life into the Church of Rome, so shall diversity enliven the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Praise Waaqaa (God).

Then came the finale, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” with its own mighty finale, “*The Kingdom’s Ours Forever.*”

Fashion note: ELCA synod presidents may have become comfortable having the title of bishop, but they still look more silly than saintly wearing a mitre hat. Maybe I’d better recant; of the pictures I snapped, only the one of Bishop Graham processing in said headgear didn’t turn out. Hmmm.



Respectfully,
Larry Speicher

Workcamp Musings

By TJ Taylor

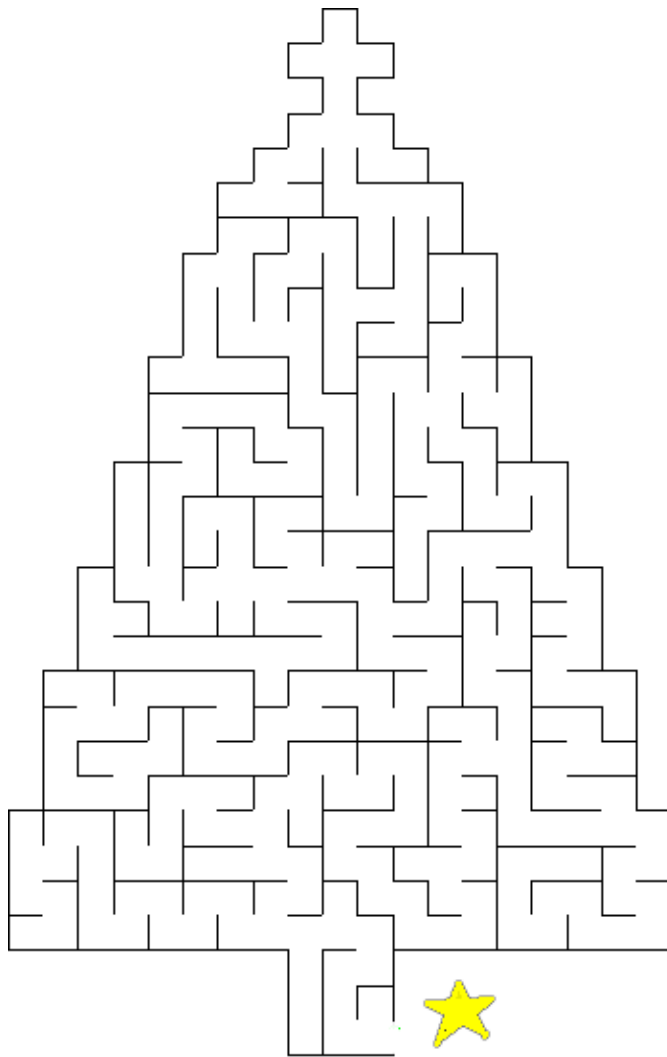
Have you ever seen those carnival games? You know, the ones with the bright signs saying “WINNER EVERY TIME!” and “SUPER EASY!” It’s nearly impossible not to be drawn by the flashing lights, the seemingly easy wins, and the soft plush toys looming over your head. The kind of toys you know you could buy at the local Wal-Mart for two dollars, but winning it in a five dollar contest is so much more satisfying. The soft cotton-filled toys may seem insignificant to most at the time, usually finding their way into the mouth of some animal, or at the bottom of the trashcan. However, the one time I decided to fall for the “SUPER EASY” carnival game seemed to be one of the most significant moments of my life, where I saw the endless possibilities in the teens of our nation.

In the summer of my junior year, I had the opportunity to partake in a volunteer service called “Workcamp.” The premise of the camp was that hundreds of students go to poverty-stricken areas of the United States, and rebuild what you could in one week. The area that year happened to be Valdosta, Georgia. Nothing like rebuilding houses in the southern heat of the summer! Aside from the heat, however, the week went by smoothly, and the town seemed

extremely thankful for our presence. So thankful, that they rented out an entire amusement park for the camp’s pleasure. Free rides? No lines? Every 16-year-old’s dream. Though where there are amusement park rides, there are amusement park games. From out of the corner of our eyes, we happened to see the most amazing plush toy ever made. A stuffed monkey on a leash. You would have thought we had just found the Holy Grail, the way we drooled over what we thought was the model of perfection in plush toys. So, buckling under the pressure of the game jockey, my friend and I played against each other, and won the monkey. Full of zest at the fact that we had won, we deemed it to be a successful day. Or so we thought.

As we gathered with our whole group at the exit, a man in an electric wheel chair stopped my friend and I. Rev. Joseph Allan Moreno, we later found out stopped us to ask about the plush monkey and where we got it. We told him that we had won it, and where the game was. Which was when he noticed our shirts, bearing the “Workcamp” logo on it. He asked if we happened to be a part of the organization in Georgia, and proudly we said yes. His eyes shined immediately, though what I didn’t expect however was for him to start to cry. He stated that he was so happy that kids and teens were coming together for a common goal, and even told us about his personal life and his hardships. So, we gathered around him, and listened. It didn’t matter that we weren’t his family, or that we barely knew his name. What mattered is the fact that we honestly cared to what he had to say, and he cared about our purpose in Georgia.

Rev. Moreno was not from Georgia, but from Florida, an hour from our area. He was so proud at the fact that we were just helping society in general, even if it wasn’t his area. And that youths came together to complete a common goal. This changed my perception on the impact one can make. If one youth group can make a minister so proud to the point of tears, imagine what a nation of teens could accomplish. There would not be any limits to our success as long as we were to come together for a common goal. Today, Rev. Moreno has the plush monkey, and I have his card. However, I will forever walk away with the greatest gift I would ask for. Hope, for our future leaders of America.



One week ago we were a simple barn establishment .. but those days are over.

So once the Inkeeper realized the Son of God was born in his stables he revamped his humble establishment into a tourist trap ironically called GRACELAND.



Peace to All in 2010

Contact the Pastors

Pastor Steve and Pastor Sarah are working together to make sure that pastoral care needs are met. To be certain that one of them is always "on," Pastor Steve takes Fridays off while Pastor Sarah takes Mondays off. You can reach both of them at the church office, or contact them by cell phone or email: Pastor Steve: 301-980-0160; pastor@poplutheran.org; Pastor Sarah: 202-870-8363; pastorsarah@poplutheran.org.

Glad Tidings is published monthly (July/August and December/January issues combined) by:

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Articles for the February issue of *Glad Tidings* are due **January 17, 2010**. Please e-mail articles to kristen.sheely@gmail.com or deliver to the newsletter mailbox outside the church office. Photos and/or graphics are welcome!
Glad Tidings is online at www.poplutheran.org.

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