



Business
Meeting

Reminder – Joint Council

Our Joint Council will meet on Tuesday, January 6th at 7pm @Messiah (St. Paul's is hosting). We will be electing new officers for council at this meeting.



Your Pastor's Ponderings

Recently, I was reflecting on the coming New Year – thinking about things both good and bad that happened in the past year and looking forward to some expected joys in the New Year. I was remembering some highlights (highs and lows for the confirmation kids): Elisa's pregnancy, Lydia's birth and baptism, the passing of some key congregation members, the troubles in the world and the stock market, the dawning of a new presidency. I was also looking forward by imaging Lydia's first step, her first word, planning reunions with friends and family, and wondering what new things the New Year will bring.

As I was having those thoughts, I couldn't help but think also about the cradle and the cross, the Christ child and the Risen Lord. For in both the nativity and the resurrection, there are highs and lows to think about – the wonder of a new child, the commonness of a manger, the prophecy of a broken heart (to Mary), the pain of crucifixion, the promise of salvation. The story of the Christ is one filled with highs and lows, filled with sorrowful incidents and hopeful expectation – his is the story of human life, the story of the New Year. We don't know for certain what our New Year will bring us (only that it will be full of highs and lows) but his story is one that always end on a high note – a note of promise and hope fulfilled – New Life.

In thinking of all those things, I was also reminded of that wonderful passage from Ecclesiastes 3 -- "To everything, there is a season." It seems a very fitting passage for a new year. So I would like to share with you a paraphrasing of that passage that I came across recently as written by Jim Taylor:

The pendulum swings, and swings back.
Every action has its equal and opposite reaction.
So we are born, and eventually we die.
We plant seeds in the spring, and rip out roots in the fall.
Killing and healing tread on each other's heels.
Buildings go up, and get torn down;
new buildings emerge from the ruins of the old.
The Phoenix rises from its own ashes.
You lose someone you love;
you bounce like a ping-pong ball
between tears and hysterical laughter.
If despair were forever, you couldn't carry on,
but you carry on because you know
despair will someday be displaced by dancing again.
You can't be in love all the time;
sooner or later, you have to become friends.
You misplace your house keys; you find them.
You forget someone's name;
it comes back to you in the middle of the night.
You lose a job, and a new career opens up.
You spend the first half of your life gaining possessions,
and the second half giving them away.
The animated conversations of young lovers mature
into the comfortable silences of long familiarity.
Why should we expect a single state of mind,
a single snapshot of experience, to last indefinitely?
Does a pendulum stop at the end of its swing?
So war and peace, love and hate,
togetherness and aloneness,
inevitably cycle and recycle.
This is how God teaches us.
Life is full of resurrections.

Life is full of resurrections. My our New Year be full of them as well – full of highs and lows, but also full of the promised hope that trusting the Christ child come Resurrected Lord offers us. Happy New Year!

Of course, that's what I think.

Pastor Will



Soup Sale by the Laurel Mountain Mission Team

The Laurel Mountain Mission Team will once again be holding a soup sale in January. There's nothing better on a cold winter day than a bowl of hot soup. In our case – Ham N Bean or Beef Vegetable will be available for \$5 a quart. Order forms are attached.

The last day to pre-order will be Sunday, January 11th. Pick-up locations will be at either Mt. Zion or Messiah. The pick-up date will be Saturday, January 17th between the hours of 11am – 1pm. Cooks should drop soup off between 10-11am so orders can be placed into jars.



SOUP SALE

Laurel Mountain Mission Fund

January 17, 2009
Pick-up 10am- Noon

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pick-up Location: _____ Messiah, New Centerville

_____ Mt. Zion, Bakersville

Soup: Ham & Bean _____ X \$5.00/ Quart

Vegetable Beef _____ X \$5.00 / Quart

Total: \$ _____ Paid _____

*All proceeds benefit the Laurel Mountain Mission Fund.

*All orders must be in by Sunday January 11th at Noon.



SNOW CAMP is Coming!

Attention! Confirmation students and any interested Jr/Sr High Youth (grade 6-12) of the Parish. Snow Camp will be held at Camp Sequanota on the weekend of February 6th thru 8th. Our topic for the Weekend will be: **Living, Dying, and Rising** -- (what's it all mean for us).

Of course, there will be games, snow activities, sledding, free time, and other fun events. There will also be a special guest with us to talk about our topic and we plan on visiting a cemetery.

The deadline to register is January 11th. The cost to each youth is \$20. (Remainder of the cost will be picked up by the parish youth account.) Youth may invite a friend to come with them. Cost for friends is \$35, plus they must complete a registration packet as well.



Confirmation

Confirmation Calendar – Monthly Preview

Confirmation Resumes

Our **first class of the winter/spring term will be held on Sunday, January 11th @5pm at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Lavansville.** Please note the location change as we will be having class at Mt. Calvary for the remainder of our sessions.

Confirmation Schedule for January

Jan. 11 – 5pm: Class resumes at MC

Jan. 18 – 5pm: Class at MC

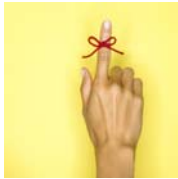
Jan. 25 – 5pm: Class @MC

Jan. 31 – 6pm: Movie Night @ MC



New Orleans Youth – Meeting!

Pastor Will would like to meet with all the youth going to New Orleans and with parents on **Sunday, January 11th immediately after late worship @ M.** We need to discuss events coming up during late winter and spring.



Jesus, Justice, and Journey – The Sr. High Event

Mark your calendars. The Sr. High Event will be held on the weekend of February 27, 28, and March 1. The theme is Jesus, Justice or Journey -- Whether you're making the journey to New Orleans or journeying the road of life, we are called to be different and called to make a difference. The speaker this year will be Dr. Richard Carlson from Gettysburg Seminary. Registration information will be available shortly.



There's Wisdom in the Word

After a Christmas Break, our monthly Parish Bible study resumes. We continue looking at the Book of Faith and How Lutherans Interpret the Bible. Part of the sessions will include video presentations by Dr. Mark Allan Powell. This month, Dr. Powell will talk about determining Right from Wrong.

Our Bible Study meets on the last consecutive Tuesday and Wednesday of the month. This month we meet on Tuesday, January 27th at 7pm and Wednesday, January 28th at 10:30am, both are in the lounge at Messiah.



Somerset Area Food Pantry Steering Committee

Thank you for your gift to help feed the needy in our community.

Your donation enables the pantry to be the Body of Christ for many in need and they would want to thank you too.

The good feeling of being able to share with someone less fortunate makes the experience and work well worth the effort.

Thank you again for your partnership in making this work possible. May God richly bless you.

Sincerely,

Jay L. Christner
Somerset Area Food Pantry
Steering Committee



On the Horizon: Worship Happenings in December

January 4th – Sunday of the Word made Flesh

On this Second Sunday in Christmas, we continue to hear the profound message of Christmas, the simple good news that God is revealed in a human person – Jesus Christ. Christ continues to come among us in the congregation gathered, the scriptures read aloud, the font of water revealed, and the bread and wine distributed. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

January 11th – Baptism of our Lord Sunday

Our re-creation in baptism is a reimagining of the Genesis creation. It is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John. The Spirit has come upon us like Jesus calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in his image.

January 18th – Here I Am Sunday

All of the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors but also the youngest child, like Samuel. Where we come from isn't important; it's where – or rather whom – we come to that matters. Jesus says he himself is the place where all will meet God.

Today marks the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and also the commemoration of Peter. Peter was led by God's grace to confess Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God.

January 25th – Conversion of St. Paul

Today the church remembers how a man of Tarsus named Saul, a former persecutor of the Christian church, was led by God's grace to become one of its chief preachers. Paul came to understand that all are one in Christ and went on to proclaim the Gospel around the world. Stories like Paul's of the call to discipleship play out the implications of our own baptismal calling to show Christ to the world.

Today marks the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Planning Ahead

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD:

Worship on Feb. 1st – A Special Guest & a Joint Parish Worship Service

It was remarked to Pastor Elisa and I on the day of Lydia's baptism, that the occasion of having all five congregations worship was a wonderful event. Some even suggested that we do it again. We liked that idea too. Well, that opportunity has presented itself.

So with the approval of both parish councils, on Sunday, February 1st, we will once again be having a Joint Parish Worship Service at Mt. Calvary at 10am. A fellowship luncheon will follow. We will also be having a guest preacher that day.

Our pastor friend from Houston, Chris Lake, who was to baptize Lydia but couldn't because of Hurricane Ike, will be present to share with us stories about the Hurricane's aftermath, how it affected

his congregation, and the ministry opportunities that arose because of it.



Raising Ourselves to New Heights for Christ

The chair is climbing higher and higher. Please see the Chair Glide Poster in the hallway to check how much further we have to climb.

If you would like to contribute to our Chair Glide System, please make your check out to **Messiah Lutheran Church** – then on the FOR line of your check, please indicate **Chair Glide Fund**. You may also indicate an amount for the Chair Glide on the "Other" line of your offering envelope.