

February 2009



St. Paul's Lutheran

MESSENGER



**Jesus was
transfigured
before them**

Mark 9:2

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Rev. Louise Mollick, Pastor
Cindi Paulsen, Music Director

Vince Jacobson, Congregation President
Linda Dundas, Secretary

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

A Gathering of Observers – New Year’s Resolution –

One of my favorite Douglas Adams books is *“Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency”*. One of the main characters is an electronic monk. The electronic monk was an anthropomorphic robot created by people to simplify their lives by believing in things for them. This particular electronic monk had gone seriously wrong and was believing “that war was peace, that good was bad, that the moon was made of blue cheese ...” hmmm, sometimes even the professionals don’t get it right.

On the surface this doesn’t seem like such a bad idea. After all, believing is not only hard work, but it also takes a lot of time. If we had an electric monk, we would not have to invest ourselves in this tedious God business on a daily basis. We could come to church on Sundays for a social gathering, perhaps as “a gathering of observers”, then go home and not worry about it again for the entire week. Alas, electric monks are fiction, and if they existed, I’m sure they would be prohibitively expensive. There must be another solution ... WAIT, I know! We could hire a pastor to believe for us!

These thoughts come upon me as I am pouring over 247 post-it notes collected at our recent cottage meetings where we were each challenged to write thoughts about our congregation on color coded notes; “The things we give thanks for”, “The dreams we dream”, and “Where we need to refocus”. Fortunately, Pastor Louise had already gone through them once and had a good start on organizing them before I started. My assignment: to find a way to be certain that everyone’s voices are heard and to think about “Where do we go from here?”

The thanks-notes buoy my heart as they lead me to consider how far we’ve come over this past year. We have been changing many things in many ways, and I know how threatening change can be, but the majority of the thanks-notes express thanks for exactly the things that have been changing the most. The other really exciting thing about the

thanks-notes is the extent to which the thanks are outward focused rather than inward focused.

The surprising thing about the dreams-notes is that we seem to be dreaming about improving on the same kinds of things we are thankful for. That is, more change and more opportunities to grow in ministry.

The interesting thing about the refocus-notes is that they are completely different. The thanks and dreams notes are about the big picture while the refocus-notes tend to be about nuts and bolts things that we want to keep from getting in the way. Yes, there are some very challenging things to address, but they strike me as being more of a distraction than a primary focus.

In general, I am excited about the richness and direction of the vision shared in these notes. I am reminded of the inspiring words Pastor Sanchez recently used, “Our Father is smiling”.

But I also see a certain dichotomy between our thanks and dreams, and our actions. I see dreams of spiritual growth and study groups and outreach opportunities and greater presence in our community, but I see relatively low participation in many of these same areas. It makes me wonder to what extent we are a “Gathering of Observers” rather than a “Gathering of Believers”. We have hired a pastor to believe for us and it is truly amazing to observe her, but our dreams will not happen unless we do more than observe.

I continue to meditate on my assignment. Where do we go from here? I started this assignment almost exclusively from a congregational leadership perspective. “What programs and initiatives do we as a congregation need to focus on, to honor and utilize this wealth of new input?” As I meditate on it, most of the next steps that are bubbling up are personal; more in the category of New Year’s Resolutions. The sign I have above my desk at work reads “BELIEVE IN YOUR DREAMS”. We have to embrace our dreams and work at them intentionally to make them happen. As a gathering of believers, there is room to believe in God and to ALSO believe in our dreams; especially when our dreams are of the things of God. Consider these next steps:

- Thou shall have no other God’s before you – Put God first in your life. Do you dream of study groups, outreach opportunities, spiritual growth? Put God first. Seize the opportunities

that exist. Invest yourself in these dreams. You will know this is working when you think about the things that occupy you because they are more important, and discover that they are no longer more important ... Still can't make it to one of the scheduled Bible study times? Talk to me or Pastor Louise. We will find a way to make one happen that fits your schedule. (membership NOT required).

- Get rid of your electric monk. Own your beliefs.
- Recruit a spiritual partner. That is, find someone with similar dreams that will check in regularly to see how you are doing; someone that you can discuss your weaknesses and challenges with. Someone who will hold your feet to the fire when the flesh is weak.
- Consider the spiritual needs of those around you. Do you know someone who could benefit from a closer relationship with God? (Everyone I know could, especially me.) Seek them out. Share the importance of God in your life. Introduce them to your spiritual role models. Invite them to Bible study. Invite them to church. REMEMBER! You will be doing them a favor!

Pray for each of us to focus our lives on God, to dream boldly, and to work intentionally toward the realization of those dreams.

Blessings,
Vince Jacobson



Snow Removal Help Needed

The Handy Helpers have been doing a great job of timely snow removal this winter, especially John Riggle, but the snow fall is proving to be more frequent than we should expect these devoted members to do alone.

A sign-up sheet for every one to help (including the congregation of Vida Abundante En Cristo) is on the entryway table. Please keep in mind that increased building use requires clearing snow from sidewalks **every snow fall** before it is packed down and forms an uneven and slippery ice hazard. Please check the enclosed calendar for building usage during your week. Thank you for your help.

Featured Ministry Team is a recurring article written by the council member liaison to that ministry team. This month's feature is by Kristen Campbell.

Featured Ministry Team

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

The tasks and responsibilities of the Worship and Music Ministry Team are the backbone of St. Paul's. This group of hardworking volunteers meets once a month in the church library. The planning that goes on during these meetings helps to build the core of worship services. The group is responsible for many activities, including picking worship liturgy, planning hymn picker schedules, choosing choir songs, planning special services like Christmas and Holy Week, and finding special music for worship.

At our past meeting on January 8th, we had numerous things on our agenda. We planned the Ash Wednesday Service and all of the Wednesday services during Lent. We also picked liturgy and hymns for Lent. We discussed other important issues such as the length of service, the communion bread and feedback from the cottage meetings.

The Worship and Music Team plays a vital part in the success of St. Paul's worship. The music we pick and the services we plan help the church offer vibrant and spiritual worship services. The members of this team include Jenni MacNaughton, Cindi Paulsen, Pastor Louise Mollick, Ruth Johnson, Connie Hessevick, Laura Eggert, and myself as the council liaison.

If you are at all interested in the issues concerning the Worship and Music Ministry Team feel free to contact any of us. We are always looking for new ideas and new members!

Thank you,
Kristen Campbell

special thanks

The Year End Deficit Challenge was met head on and exceeded! Huge thanks to all who participated and to all who pre-paid in lump-sum their 2009 pledges. WOW!

COUNCIL NEWS

St. Paul's Church Council meets at 7:00 p.m. the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Congregation members are welcome to attend and/or submit items for the agenda by contacting one of the council members.

Council Meeting Highlights

January 13, 2009

Present were Kristen Campbell, Connie Hessevick, Kathy Powers, Mary Hromatka, Carolyn Carpenter, Pr. Louise Mollick, Vince Jacobson and Phil Eckhert.

Council President Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Devotions were provided by Kristen.

Vince began the meeting by showing a Power Point presentation recapping the congregation's post-it notes from the Cottage Meetings of last fall. They were categorized as Thanks, Dreams, and Refocus. He also reported on financial matters showing that St. Paul's had an amazing year end. We have enough funds for this year but unfortunately not more than that.

Considering the above information, Vince reported from the Transformational Ministry Team meeting held on January 12. Their recommendation involves the vision of St. Paul's being a place where ALL are welcome and the implementation of that vision should begin with a specific plan for regular contact with every member. Discussion involved how this would be done and the urgency of implementing this vision before the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25.

Pastor Louise reported on many meetings and events as well as contacts with St. Paul's members. During Lent we will have soup suppers & services using Holden Evening Prayer, and on Sundays during Lent the Adult Forum will feature "Reclaiming the E Word".

There was a ministry team report from the Staff Support Team. Year end reviews will take place between January 25 and the first week of February.

The Financial Secretary's Report and the Balance Sheet were provided to everyone. The Finance Report showed that there were 39 pledging units this year (the same number as last year) with a similar dollar amount. If things continue as they have in 2008, we will have exhausted our cash reserves by early 2010. There was a great deal of discussion regarding finances and what we should recommend to the congregation at the meeting on January 25. Phil and Vince will work on developing a scenario and summary of where we are and what the possibilities are. Because of the short time between this meeting and January 25th, Mary moved that budget recommendations be voted on by e-mail. Phil seconded the motion and it passed.

Vince is seeking out and contacting new council member candidates for 2009.

Mary moved to accept the Transformational Ministry Team's recommendations of our vision for St. Paul's future and begin its implementation. Kathy seconded the motion and it passed. There was more discussion regarding how we would do that. Council members agreed to join the Transformational Ministry Team in calling every member. Pastor Louise will divide up names and provide those along with a "crib sheet" that callers will have for a resource regarding the Spiritual Gifts Inventory and also invite members to the annual meeting.

A potluck brunch will follow our service on January 25 (11:00 – 11:45) and following that, we will hold the annual meeting (11:45 – 1:00). Vince will develop an outline for the meeting's business. Carolyn and Jan Guetschow will organize the potluck brunch.

Phil moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Carpenter

St. Paul's congregation is pleased to send you this newsletter. However, if you prefer not to receive it, please call the church office at 952-938-4683 or email us at StPauls@saintpaulslutheran.org.

Reminder: March newsletter items are due in the office by Sunday, February 15.



The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Jesus climbs the mountain. His face and clothing are changed. He shines like bright light. Moses and Elijah join him, this one who is the fulfillment of the law and prophecy. God speaks, "This is my beloved, listen to him."

It is as strange a scene as there is in the Gospels. Yet even without the voice there is no doubt what we are witnessing along with the disciples. It is Jesus of Nazareth all right. It is the one who has come to live among us, tramping around the countryside, feeling tired, hungry and footsore – at times overwhelmed. And it is the Messiah, the Christ, his holiness shining through his humanness, his face afire with the glory of God. It is a foretaste of what can and does happen to each one of us. As we come down the mountain to enter the Lenten season of our lives, as we travel the dusty roads of this world, tired, hungry, footsore and too often overwhelmed, God still shines through our lives. As we reach out to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the lonely, and invite people into the new reality of God's kingdom life our faces shine with God's love and purpose.

Come celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord on February 22 at 9:30 A.M.
Prepare to join the journey to the cross.

Midweek Lenten Service Schedule

February 25, Ash Wednesday
7:00 pm – Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1
6:00 pm – Soup Supper
6:45 pm – Holden Evening Prayer

April 9, Maundy Thursday
7:00 pm – Foot washing and Holy Communion

April 10, Good Friday
7:00 pm – Worship

Reclaiming the "E" Word



Beginning March 1, the **Adult Forum** will focus on the material presented in a challenging little book by ELCA Lutheran pastor, Kelly Fryer. The book is entitled, *Reclaiming the "E" Word: Waking Up to Our Evangelical Identity*. **Please order your copy by Feb. 22** either by signing up at the table in our gathering space outside the sanctuary or by calling the church office. (A donation of \$10 is recommended to help defray the cost of the books.)

This book, part of the *Lutheran Voices* series will be of great use to us as we seek to live out God's mission for us to be an "open and inviting congregation spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ" and work to be known throughout the community as "a congregation where ALL are welcome." Come, listen, and share. Come and see what God is up to in the future that has been claimed for us!



You are God's Love for your Spouse . . .

Find out how to share it with a Lutheran Marriage Encounter weekend. Get away from the everyday demands of the world so the two of you can really focus on each other. You'll spend two nights in a comfortable hotel and enjoy five delicious meals from Friday at 7:00 pm to Sunday at 5:00 pm. Four presenting couples, including a Lutheran clergy couple, give a series of presentations followed by questions the couples discuss in the privacy of their hotel room. There is no counseling and no group sharing. No one tries to change who you are. It's great for couples who already have a good marriage and want to enrich their relationship, but it also does wonders for those marriages that have lost their luster through years of child rearing and work obligations.

The next Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends in Minnesota are March 27-29 in Duluth or April 24-26 in Brooklyn Center. Please register a month in advance.

For more information, contact Dick & Judy Dehnel at 952-432-3105, Pete & Phyllis McMahon at 763-561-1575 or visit www.godlovesmarriage.org.



La Rosca de Reyes Mexican Three Kings Cake

Twelfth Night... *the eve of Epiphany, the adoration of the Magi* has traditionally marked the end of the Christmas season

St. Paul's annual 12th Night celebration was a joint gathering with Vida Abundante En Cristo. Pastor Louise began the evening with a few words, Juan played his guitar, sang several songs in Spanish, and then translated into English - all centering on this special church calendar evening. About 50 members of both congregations enjoyed the roaring bonfire, lots of potluck foods - grilled hot dogs and brats, s'mores, and real tacos. The "real" tacos were made the way they are made in the Yucatan in Mexico (pulled pork, mashed beans, guacamole, and pickled onions (the habanero peppers were omitted out of consideration for the gringo's delicate palate).

Much of the fun centered on the La Rosca de Reyes, the traditional Mexican King Cake. "Twelfth Night is known as *Dia de los Tres Reyes (Day of the Three Kings)*. This is the day when most Mexican children receive presents from the three wise men that made the journey to see the Baby Jesus." The cakes are a universal custom throughout Mexico. In or under the cake are small figures of a Baby Jesus. Whoever finds the babies must plan a party for February 2.

There were seven babies in our cake and there are seven people with able assistants who are now planning another get-together on Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday, February 24th (the day before Ash Wednesday), rather than February 2nd. Add this to your calendar, and plan to join in the fun. Thanks to all who made our 12th Night so special.

Come to Mardi Gras, February 24, 6:00 P.M.

Thanks from ICA to the community

1/5/2009 press release...

The ICA staff and volunteers shout "thank you". Our goal of \$200,000 was set early in 2008 - the target was met and exceeded. By December 31 donations totaled \$345,884.61! The surplus will allow us to cushion the increase in needs that have already been realized. Generosity came in many forms: a 5 year old delivered a jar of coins, an office group cancelled their holiday dinner and donated the money, \$50 checks, \$20 gift cards and food a plenty to stock our shelves.

Your kindness lifted our staff and volunteers throughout the holiday season. We now walk into 2009 with our eyes open to the newest of needs. Please consider giving throughout the year - with sustainable and predictable funding we will meet the needs of our neighbors together.

With gratitude,
Cathy Maes
ICA Executive Director

Free Dental Care

The Shablott Family Dentistry, 33 10th Ave. South, Hopkins extends an invitation to participate in their annual Dentistry From The Heart (DFTH) event. The team of dental professionals will work from 7:00 am until 3:00 pm caring for as many patients as they can on a firstcome first served basis, **but only on February 13, 2009.**

The staff at Shablott Family Dentistry will do whatever they can on DFTH day to relieve pain and fix problems. Patients who need ongoing care or have problems that cannot be fixed in one day are referred to community clinics where they can receive ongoing treatment at low or no cost.

This year they look forward to providing dental care to many more people than last year because dental costs continue to rise and the number of people without dental insurance continues to grow. Visit www.shablottfamilydentistry.com or call 952-935-5599 for more information.

Sunday Bible Readings

February 1 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalms 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

February 8 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalms 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

February 15 – 6th Sunday after Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalms 30

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Mark 1:40-45

February 22 – Transfiguration of Our Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalms 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

Prayer & Bible Study

✝ **Bible study with Pastor Louise** is held every other Saturday morning from 9:30 – 11:00 am in St. Paul's Library. Please check the monthly calendar for exact dates.

✝ **St. Paul's Prayer Line** is activated by calling the coordinator, Maxine Rieman at 952-238-8516, cell 763-807-7682, or calling the church office when she cannot be reached.

✝ **ELCA radio ministry**, *Grace Matters*, is on Sundays at 6:30 a.m. KSTP 1500 AM and 10:30 p.m. WFMP 107.1 FM.

✝ **Daily devotional booklet**, *Christ in Our Home*, is available on the entryway table.

✝ **ELCA online Bible study**, *Daily Discipleship* is based on the lectionary and online at www.elca.org/evangelism/daily-discipleship.

✝ **Other prayer resources** are available at www.elca.org/prayer.

West Metro Grief Support Group

West Metro Grief Support Coalition invites all persons experiencing grief due to a death. Grief support groups offer hope and healing through education, listening, sharing, prayer and fellowship.

Saturdays 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Wooddale Lutheran Church
4003 Wooddale Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Carol Fiedler ~ church liaison
(952)926-9864



DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC
February 7	Renee Compo, RN	Wellness during Grief
February 14	Judy McCabe	Personal Story
February 21	Janet Yeats, MA, LAMFT	Ambiguous Loss
February 28	Dee Bailey, MA, PCC	Moving through Grief

For more information, please call our coalition co-coordinator,
Darcie Rodman at (763) 546-4404

Directory Update: Rey & Lois Lindquist are wintering in Medowlakes, Texas and plan to return in April. Their mail will be forwarded and they can be reached by cell phone. We wish them safe journey, enjoyment of the warm weather, and look forward to their return. We will miss their cheery faces.

February 2009 Service Team

★church council member

Campbell – Eric, Deb, Kristen★
Eckhert/Brenden – Phil★, Sheri, Emma
& Carl Peaslee, Sarah Eckhert
Gilbertson - Roger, Darla
Hanning – Elsie
Johnson – Regina
Larson – Tom, Rachel
Madson – Annette, John
Mikulay – Mike, Beth
Pfaendtner - Kathy, Olivia, Helene, &
Luke
Powers – Tom, Kathy★, Jack, Nick
Riggle – John, Shirley
Schwitzer – Bill
Streater – Kim, Dylan, John
Thompson – Ruth

March 2009 Service Team

★church council member

Anderson – Doug, Terri, Cory, Sammi
Bonner/Hromatka - Dean, Mary★, Nora
Eggert – Laura
Erickson – Muriel
Falk – Grace, Ron
Hanson – Darold, Diane
Jacobson – Vince★, Kris
Lindquist – Rey, Lois
Ramsden – Roger, Joyce
Rieman – Maxine
Schaller – Shirley
Schmitz – Matt, Shari, Maggie, Heidi,
Haily, Kelsey, Riley
Smith – Lorraine
Tollefson – Paul, Pat
Uden – Jim, Nancy



2 Sandra Lubarski
5 Bode Lubarski
7 Cassidy Streater
12 Sammi Anderson,
Craig Smith
14 Eric Campbell
16 Elsie Hanning
18 Lorraine Smith
21 Peter Tollefson
22 Mike Mikulay
25 Jeanne Moe
26 Bernie Johnson
27 Joyce Reynolds
28 Wyatt Lubarski

Blessed Anniversaries

2 Ray & Jean Olson
4 Dean Bonner & Mary Hromatka
6 John & Shirley Riggle
9 Bill & Barb Wolfe
28 Tom & Kim Streater
28 Phil Eckhert & Sheri Brenden





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Please deliver within 5 days
of February 1, 2009**



LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!!

Sunday, all
Sunday, February 8
Sunday, February 22

9:30 am – Holy Communion followed by refreshments & education
Little Lambs
Transfiguration of Our Lord, 1 pm Beacon Hill, 2 pm Chapel View

Monday, all except 16
Monday, February 9
Monday, February 16

9:30 am – Staff meeting & Handy Helpers
7:00 pm – Spong discussion group
President's Day, office closed

Tuesday, February 3
Tuesday, February 10
Tuesday, February 24

7:00 pm – Transformational Ministry
7:00 pm - Council
Fat Tuesday, 6:00 pm Mardi Gras with Vida Abundante En Cristo!

Wednesday, all except 25
Wednesday, February 11
Wednesday, February 25

7:30 pm – Choir rehearsal, 6:30 pm Confirmation Ministry
11:30 am – Prayer Shawl Ministry
6:20 pm – Choir warm-up, **7:00 pm – Ash Wednesday Service**

Thursday, February 5
Thursday, February 12
Thursday, February 19

11:30 am – Befrienders
Pastor out through Saturday, February 21
6:15 pm – Our Saviour's serving

Friday, February 6, 27
Friday, February 27

10:00 am to Noon – Coffee House hours with Pastor Louise
11:00 am – Meals on Wheels

Saturday, all
Saturday, February 14
Saturday, February 28

9:30 am – Grief Support at Wooddale Lutheran, St. Louis Park
Valentine's Day, 8:30 am – Men's monthly breakfast
9:30 am – Bible Study with Pastor Louise