

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

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**SHEPHERD OF THE MOUNTAINS
LUTHERAN CHURCH
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THE SHEPHERD'S CROOK
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JANUARY 2009

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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New Year's Thoughts:

Have you ever wondered why January marks the beginning of the year? You could "google" the question but I'd rather approach the question with an open mind.

To me January isn't a very appropriate time to begin a new year. The days are short; the nights are long. It's cold, and in Estes Park, windy. Most everything is dead or dormant. Even the evergreens take on a darker emotional color. In the midst of a post-Christmas let-down we are expected to have a "Happy New Year."

But we have options. We could agree with the liturgical calendar and mark the first Sunday of Advent (fourth Sunday before Christmas) as the beginning of the secular calendar as well. But its still cold and wind and almost everything is still dead or dormant.

How about May 1 being declared New Year's Day? The days are longer. The sun is higher in the sky. The days are warmer; the trees are beginning to bud; the grass is beginning to green. Plus, we just celebrated Easter. Here is a part of the year that we can certainly celebrate as "new", both in the natural world and our faith story.

But for all my considerable influence over the secular calendar I suspect that we will still celebrate New Year's on January 1. So is there anything in the dark, dead, dormant, and cold that we can celebrate?

Perhaps it is *because* January 1 is dark, dormant, dead, and cold that it can hold Christian significance for something new. There is in our

secular New Year's celebration almost a defiant hope that is proclaimed despite what is evident around us. This is the same defiant hope that Christians proclaim. Just as New Year's Day proclaims a "not yet" hope confident that Spring will come, so also the Christian lives in a "not yet" hope in the midst of a dark and sinful world confident in the Easter promise and the promise of Christ's Second Coming. Just as its secular counterpart on January 1 celebrates not what is but what can be, so also Christianity, in the midst of all that would deny God's goodness and mercy, celebrates the promise of what is to come.

The secular New Year celebrates a hope that is only a promise. The Christian does the same.

Pastor Dan



YOUTH FOR HIRE—Just a reminder that we have 5 able bodies available for hire. Geoffrey, Brendan, Chelsea, Andre and Amber are ready to clean out your garage, rake pine needles, help put up Christmas decorations, paint, stack wood, etc. Their rate is \$10 per person an hour. If you need some work done and just really need some able bodies to perform it - pull out the 'honey do' lists and consider hiring one or more of these teens. They are on a mission to earn \$4,000 for the JESUS, JUSTICE and JAZZ 2009 New Orleans ELCA High School Gathering! Call Kris Adams (586-1942) to work out the details.



Marilyn's Microwave Peanut Brittle

1 1/2 cups raw shelled peanuts, skins ons
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon butter or margarine
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking soda

Stir together peanuts, sugar, syrup, and salt in 1 1/2 quart glass casserole or microwave-safe container. Cook 3 1/2 min. on high. Stop. Stir well. Return to microwave for 3 1/2 min. on high. Stop. Stir in butter. Microwave 1 min. 40 sec. longer on high. Stir in vanilla. Add baking soda, quickly stir until light and foamy. Immediately pour out onto a lightly greased surface (baking sheet, marble slab, etc.), spread to about 1/4 inch thickness. When cool, break into pieces. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 1 pound.

"SAFEWAY GIFT CARDS: If you already shop at Safeway how would you like to have 5% of those grocery dollars come back to the church? Here is how that can happen. SMLC has purchased Safeway gift cards in \$100 denominations at a discounted rate. The cards are then sold at face value. They can be used at any Safeway store or subsidiary nationwide and are redeemed for the amount of your purchase like any other gift card. Any balance on your card is noted on the bottom of your receipt and can be used anytime. There are no expiration dates and no processing or activation fees. See Kelly Brown (586-2021) to purchase your cards or ask any questions and know that 5% is coming back to the church."



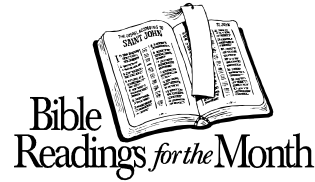
Be sure to see the new look of our website www.smlc.us; and turn on your sound. Note also that our website was chosen Website of the Month! Good work, Bob Rising.



Following the annual meeting on January 25 we will fellowship together with a potluck lunch. There will be a sign up sheet for those who would like to bring either a main dish, salad, dessert, or rolls. Please plan to stay for a good meal and lots of fun visiting with your church family!

January 3, 2009

Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:[1-9] 10-18



January 10, 2009

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 17, 2009

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 25, 2009

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20



From Kellams: Please pray for the family and friends of Erica Forney. Erica, 9 years old, was a friend and former classmate of our granddaughter Emily. Erica died on Thanksgiving day after being involved in a bicycle-automobile accident. Please also pray for Emily's understanding of this tragedy.

From Connie Westley: For Jan Carroll, her sister, who had artery replacement surgery in both legs on 12/4/2008.

Prayers of thanks for successful surgery today with unilateral knee replacement for Kelly Brown (McKee Medical Center) and Mardy Groskreuz (Boulder Community). Both ladies will be in the hospital for a few days then working hard on rehab and strengthening. Prayers for them as they go through the healing and physical therapy that all goes well without complications.

Don and Gloria Lickfett's daughter, Sally, has returned home but is weak and thin. At this time, Don and Gloria plan to leave Arkansas the day after Christmas to return to Colorado. Safe travel!

Please lift up prayers for successful surgery and recovery for June Lindemann who had shoulder surgery 12/22/2008, Monday morning. Update: June Lindemann's surgery on her shoulder went well, and was less extensive than expected so she should be recovering more quickly....Prayers of thanks, and continued rehab and healing. She will be at McKee Medical Center in Loveland until Christmas Day.

Also, Keep Mark Lorenz in your prayers as he receives a variety of treatments for his cancer. Because of his age and the nature of his cancer the doctors are recommending an extensive treatment program beginning with surgery, followed by radiation, followed by chemotherapy.



Dear Parishioners: We thank you for your generous donation to La Puente Home. It is our goal to meet the needs of those in need, and your help is much appreciated.

Thank you and God Bless,
The Staff at La Puente

CHURCH PROPERTIES NOVEMBER INFORMATION

The Church Properties Committee wants to remind everyone to use caution when adjusting the thermostats at the church. The “up” and “down” buttons are the only buttons which should be used. The thermostat should be in the “auto” heating mode at all times. If you have any questions, please talk to Stan Johnson or other properties committee members.

A big “THANK YOU” goes to Dick Lindemann for building the missal stand on the church altar.

We also thank Mark Lorenz for heading up the crew that built our new outdoor storage shed.

If you have any questions about church property issues, please call me at 613-1208.

Stan Johnson, committee chair

ADULT FORUM OFFERINGS IN NOVEMBER JANUARY

One Sunday morning last month we experimented with moving the Adult Forum to the sanctuary so that conversations in the Fellowship Hall and Narthex don’t have to be interrupted. That worked well...so we will meet in the sanctuary from now on. Those who want to participate in the Adult Forum programs are welcome to carry their coffee with them.

SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY:

January 4: “In God’s Name: Wisdom from the World’s Great Spiritual Leaders” is a documentary produced by National Geographic. ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson is one of the twelve who were interviewed and his contributions were especially insightful. We will play his parts of the DVD and talk about what it means to be a world religious leader in such difficult times.

January 11: Pastor Dan will lead the session, introducing us to the ELCA web-site and showing us how to navigate it. He will also introduce us to our own congregation’s web-site.

January 18: Nancy Knoll will lead a session on “A Truly Relevant Liturgy”. Our Lutheran liturgies aren’t just offerings out of tradition...they speak remarkably well to contemporary Christian life in a complicated world. Join us for this discussion.

January 25: No Forum – this morning is our Annual Meeting for Financial Matters.

Thanks to those of you who offered more Adult Forum topic suggestions. Watch this column in the February newsletter and you may see some of them becoming Forum offerings.