



# Heart Matters

Your Connection to Bethany Lutheran Church and Littlest Angels Preschool

## MARCH 2010

Bethany Lutheran Church  
Littlest Angels Preschool

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### News from Pastor Jon

The following Bible passage comes from a book called The Message by Eugene Peterson. The Message is a modern rendering of the Bible. This passage comes from the first Chapter of John:

**"He came to his own people, but they didn't want him. But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves...The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son. Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."**

I have been reading a book called The Jesus I Never Knew by Phillip Yancey. Yancey describes the incarnation of Jesus in a way that is very helpful for me because of a similar experience I had in my youth. When I was young, we had a number of fish tanks and three aquariums, filled mostly with guppies and other small freshwater fish. I can remember spending many hours taking care of the fish tanks and bowls. I had to keep the chemistry in the tank just right. I had to feed the fish enough to live, but not so much that the food would be floating around, fouling the water. Most of all, I had to change the water every couple of weeks, which required siphoning out most of the water, without catching a fish in the suction!

As much as I loved my fish and wanted them to be able to understand that I meant them no harm, whenever I opened the lid of the aquarium, they would scurry away and hide as best they could. Behind rocks, in the seaweed, behind the filter - they would swim away and feel hidden from whatever was opening the lid. Even when I fed them, it took a while for the fish to come near the surface and then only for a moment. It was clear to me that the fish did not understand me or my intentions. If I ever wanted to be able to communicate to the fish my nature and how much I cared, I would have to become a fish, which was impossible.

However, if it was possible, would I want to be in that aquarium? Would I want to eat fish food, and swim in the water that was constantly getting dirtier? Would I be able to stay away from that interesting tube, which oops, sucked another fish into a bucket and had to be moved back to the tank in a net? Of course not! I had no desire to be a fish.

*(Continued on p. 2)*

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## News from Pastor Jon

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For Jesus to have become a human baby took much more sacrifice than it would for me to be a fish. Jesus gave up the perfect love, peace, and joy of heaven to be in our sin-filled world. Jesus became vulnerable to physical and emotional harm as a human being. Jesus put up with all of the foul and nasty effects of a world that was becoming more and more dirty in many ways. And he came for one purpose . . . to save all of us from this world and give back to us the perfect creation.

On Good Friday, we witness the ultimate sacrifice and purpose of Jesus' incarnation. He not only becomes one of us, but he dies for us. We did not understand his behaviors or statements. Some of us did not even want him as a person. Yet, he endured all of this so that we could have what he was willing to leave for a period of time. On Easter morning, we witness the miracle of the resurrection, see the One who came into our neighborhood, breaking the finality of death, and granting to us the promise of everlasting life in the presence of God.

Happy Easter,  
Pastor Jon



## Notes from Pastor Tom

In a recent article, Dr. Dale Meyer, President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and formerly speaker of the Lutheran Hour, offered the following...

"Monday most automakers reported 30% drops in sales during December, with Hyundai off 48% and Chrysler 51%. Oil is going back up and a gallon of gas may soon be back at \$2 (*Pr. Tom notes: That's St. Louis money!*). We're poorer than we used to be.

"It's easy to overlook the obvious. When Jesus said, "Blessed are you who are poor," He was speaking to His disciples, not to the general population (Luke 6:20). Yes, God loves all people but Jesus doesn't say "Blessed" to all Americans in this recession but only to His followers. How's that?

"Because His followers are reminded what we've professed all along, that ultimately we have zilch, nada, nichts, nothing. America is like the prodigal son, broke after a spending spree, wallowing in recession. But the prodigal "came to his senses" and said, "I will set out and go back to my father" (Luke 15:17-18). A Christian identifies with that. Getting poorer is reminding us that we have nothing of our own, no hidden accounts that permit us not to need God. That means that wondering when the economy will come back is off the mark, at least faith-wise."

So here's a question to meditate upon . . . "How does the fact that God owns everything and we own nothing help in an economic downturn?"

Pax,  
Pastor Tom



## Sermon Themes

The month of March will be filled with our preparations for Holy Week and Easter. We are following a series developed at the St. Louis Seminary. This series looks at the concept of Postmodernism and reflects on the words of Jesus from the cross. The word Postmodernism is difficult to define by itself. In this sermon series, we will define some of the attitudes behind the word and some of the attitudes that are pervasive in our culture. It will be interesting to see that the words of Jesus from the cross are helpful when we look at these attitudes and beliefs of our modern world.

## February Angelic News - Littlest Angels Preschool

### "...so help you God?"

"I Swear. As God is my witness. I swear on my mother's grave (or a stack of Bibles). That's the God's honest truth. Cross my heart and hope to die - stick a needle in my eye. My promise didn't count because I crossed my fingers. Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth...?" I'm sure these phrases sound familiar! We've all used them at one time or another in conversations when we are trying to convince someone we're telling the truth.

This month at Littlest Angels, we will begin teaching the children about the importance of honesty. I say "begin" because it is difficult for a small child to distinguish between fact and fantasy. If you want to hear a myriad of tall tales, preschool is the place to be! I can't begin to tell you how creative these 2 - 5 year olds can be! By age 6, a child knows the difference between storytelling, a lie, and the truth. By 7 or 8, a child can be held accountable for his honesty.

God tells us that honesty is a direct reflection of our inner character - our heart! In Matthew 12:34, Jesus says, "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." What comes out of our mouths is really an indication of what's inside of us. If our hearts are full of hurt, anger, fear, low self-esteem, selfishness, greed, and laziness we're going to tend to be dishonest! These are the things that provoke us to lie. On the other hand, if our hearts are full of love, happiness, joy, peace, confidence, and self-worth, we will love the truth and the truth will set us free to be honest!

If our heart is malfunctioning, we go to the doctor and find out what's wrong with it. Hopefully, it can be repaired or maybe a new heart is needed. The same is true for our "spiritual" heart. Daily, we can go to our Great Physician and ask Him to create a new heart in us. We ask Him to take away our hurts and fears so that our hearts can become clean and new.

One of my favorite stories for children about honesty is titled THE BIG, FAT, ENORMOUS LIE. This is a story about a little boy who tells a little lie. When his father asked him if he ate all the cookies in the cookie jar, the little boy is afraid to admit that he did because he doesn't want his parents to be angry. As he thinks about his lie, it takes on a physical form of a big green monster that gets bigger and bigger and bigger and won't leave him alone. After he is honest and admits his mistake, the monster shrinks and disappears. Ever had a big green monster following you around? I have. It feels so good when we confess our untruths and can start fresh with a clean heart. Yes, so help me God!

Kathy Stinson, Director



## Bethany in the News

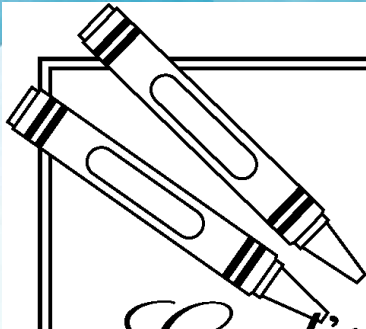
**"Short Takes" from "The Almanac", Wednesday, February 24, 2010**

### Google versus God

Google recently announced an effort to offer the world's fastest Internet connection, at speeds 100 times faster than those available today. According to Menlo Park church Bethany Lutheran, however, that mantle has already been usurped.

"PRAYER: THE WORLD'S FASTEST WIRELESS CONNECTION,"  
a sign in front of the church read last week.

**For more "Bethany in the News", go to [www.bethany-mp.org/news](http://www.bethany-mp.org/news)**



# Just for **KIDS**

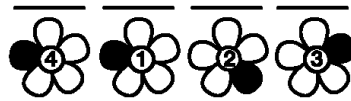
*God's teaching is like....*

In Deuteronomy, Moses' words to the children of Israel remind us of spring, which brings growth and new life.

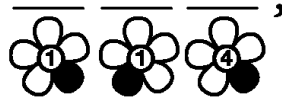
Use the flower code below to fill in the blanks, revealing Deuteronomy 32:2, NIV.



"Let my teaching fall like



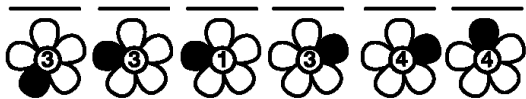
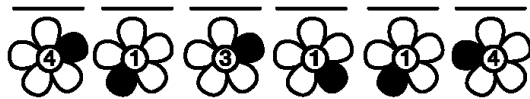
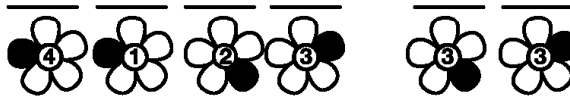
and my words descend like



like



like abundant



Answers: rain, dew, showers on new grass, rain on tender plants

## **Women's Ministries**

**The mission donation for March will go to Teen Haven, a division of Water Street Ministries.**

Teen Haven's purpose is to advance the kingdom of God by reaching urban youth with the gospel, discipling them to maturity, and equipping them to be leaders in their communities.

Since 1963, when founder Bill Drury started knocking on the doors of teenage gang members in Philadelphia, Teen Haven has existed to see young people come to know Christ and grow to become agents of change for Him in their community.

At Teen Haven, we are blessed to share the Gospel with urban youth and disciple them as they grow in their faith, develop leadership skills, and impact their families, schools, neighborhoods, and cities. We're seeing a generation of city changers growing in the name of Christ!

- Teen Haven has three city youth center locations: Philadelphia, York and Lancaster.
- Teen Haven Camp in York County operates year-round.
- About 60 youth are serving as teen leaders in the ministry of Teen Haven.



## **Women's Exercise Class at Bethany**

**Join Kate Ermacoff as she leads an exercise class on  
Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays  
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
in the Family Center**

**Bring a mat, some water, and your energy  
for these free exercise classes  
that are designed for ladies of all activity levels.**

**For more information call the church office  
650-854-5897, ext. 210.**

## Staff Spotlight

**Linda Bradley** – Linda celebrates her 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary working at Bethany this month! Amazingly, she continues to find new and innovative ways to serve the Lord after all that time. The past few years have been filled with the transition from a classic church secretary position to her new role as Director of Lay Ministry. In many ways, the office no longer has that “classic” secretary position, although each person in the office fulfills some of the roles that were once present in the single person.

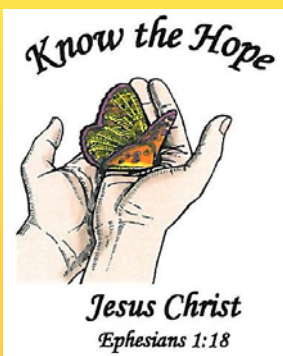
Linda spends less time on things like the bulletins and the newsletter, and now is able to spend more time with our community outreach, including the ideas that came from the Pasta with Pastor dinners. With the wonderful ideas that came from our preschool and church families, Linda has a lot of new projects, all of which involve helping people explore their talents and gifts from God. We are blessed to have Linda in this role and she has been blessed by the time spent working in this ministry.

**Karen Williams** – Karen began at Bethany working as the “floating assistant” which meant that she helped in all of the classrooms. She was assigned to a classroom where a teacher or assistant teacher was out for the day. While Karen was very good in this role, this year she has moved into a permanent position with the Little Lambs. Karen is also an ice skating instructor after school. She brings her wealth of experience helping children learn to skate, into her work at Littlest Angels. We are blessed to have Karen Williams with the Little Lambs.

## California-Nevada-Hawaii LWML Convention Wyndham Hotel, San Jose, CA ~ April 29-May 2

*“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened  
in order that you may know the hope in which He has called you...” - Ephesians 1:18*

Count down to the CNH LWML Convention “Know the Hope” with special guests:



- Rev. Robert Newton will proclaim the message of Hope
- Rev. Ken Klaus of Lutheran Hour Ministries will lead us in Bible Study on the Hope
- Peggy Turnipseed will inspire us with Hope
- Dina Vendetti will lead us in songs of joy and praise
- Rev. Dereje Fantaye will share his Hope in the mission field
- Linda Arnold will bring the news of Hope from LWML national.

During the Saturday evening banquet, you will hear keynote speaker Heidi Floyd from the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer who will share the path of Hope she travels, and you'll be entertained by the Sizzling Seniors.

**Plan now to attend! Registration material and other information can be found on the CNH LWML website at [cnhlwml.org](http://cnhlwml.org), or talk to Vickie Schmidt, LWML Zone 8 President.**

## Youth News

There are many exciting events coming up!

### March 13 – Bethany at San Jose Tech Museum

There will be a group event for Junior and Senior High and we are also inviting families and friends to join us for an afternoon of exploration and adventure at the San Jose Tech Museum. Please call Pilar Buckley at 650-854-5897 or go to [www.bethany-mp.org/techfun](http://www.bethany-mp.org/techfun) for ticket sign ups.

### March 27 – Workin' at the Car Wash!

We will hold a unique event called a Car Wash-athon. We will offer free car washes to anyone who comes into the parking lot during the hours we are open. We will ask people to sponsor the youth for the number of cars we can wash during the time we are open. At this event, we will do something nice for the community while also raising funds.

### April 10 & April 24 – Save the Date

A Junior High event will be held on April 10 and a Senior High event will held on April 24.

### May 1 – 4 – Yard Sale

We will have a yard sale at Pilar's house. We are happy to accept any items now and hope to have a silent auction at church during the same weekend. If you have items to donate for the yard sale, please call the office.

God willing, we will be at the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA in mid July. Please pray for our efforts to bring this large group.



## *Men's & Women's Breakfast Bible Study*

**March 13**

**9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

• **Delicious Breakfast** • **Study God's Word** • **Prayer Time** • **Fellowship**

The groups meet separately on the second Saturday of each month, September to May.

The men meet in the Family Center and the women in the Fireside Room.

This month, the women will study "Sapphira – Dishonest to God" based on Acts 4:32-5:11.

They will look closely at what it means to be honest with God, others, and ourselves, to see how seriously God takes dishonesty, and to see that God hold us responsible for our actions.

*Babysitting is provided, if there is a need.*

**Men and women of all ages are invited! Mark your calendar today!**



## **Daylight Savings Time begins on March 14**

Don't forget to "Spring Forward" and set your clocks ahead  
before you go to bed Saturday night!