



Emmanuel News Notes

January, 2010

Pastor Lookingbill ponders. light

I had always thought that Sankta Lucia was just a Swedish tradition, with the candles in the hair of the young girls in winter lighting the cold winter mornings while they brought warm saffron buns to the household! I was recently at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence for a Christmas buffet and sitting with one of the young Norwegian couples who work at the Embassy. They told me that the Norwegians too celebrate St. Lucia. I was puzzled at first, because it's fairly well known that the Swedes and the Norwegians don't always agree about such things. But my new friends gently reminded me that any opportunity to light a candle in the darkness of winter in Norway where some parts only have daylight for two hours each day is a great way to celebrate life! So, Lucia brings light and life to the long dark winter night in Norway too.

Epiphany is the season of light for the Christian Church. It begins with the story of the wise men from the east following the light of the Star of Bethlehem, which hovered over the place where Jesus has been born. In the celebration of Christmas we remember that winter was upon the little town and the only place where Joseph and Mary could find some safety and warmth is in the stable below the Inn, a cave where the animals were kept. They had been traveling according to St. Luke, a requirement of the Roman authority, to register for the census that was enforced for tax purposes. Because Joseph was of the house of David, he and his family had to go to the city of David for the registration.

The light that the wise men from the east followed is the symbol of God's guidance in this life, for all wise men and those who have gifts to share. The fact that these particular wise men were almost certainly gentiles means that the whole world is to know about this child born of Mary, not just the immediate family and not only the Jewish community. The light that is coming into the world is a "light to the nations," a blessing to all people of good will. When the magi opened their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh they fulfilled the ancient prophesy of Isaiah that the people who see this light shall "thrill and rejoice" at the coming together of the people.

Epiphany is a time of coming together. In our traditions here at Emmanuel and in the USA, the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany have mostly been merged into a time of family reunions and gift sharing. College students come home from their campuses, adult children come back home from their work places, brothers and sisters try to bring families together – we travel even farther than the wise men did to find a new light in Bethlehem. It is coming together that brings us into the warmth of God's good gifts and the promise that this winter light is a guide to a better life, a better year, a better faith.

In this spirit of gathering and gift sharing, the members and friends of Emmanuel have again made a wonderful difference in the lives of many people. The Southeast Community Ministry has again shared gifts provided by our members for those who are barely getting by in D.C. These folks are the happy recipients of the sharing of the Christian spirit during this time of year, a sign to them that our Lord has come, our generosity only a shadow of the great light that Jesus has been. Faith is refreshed each year with this affirmation of God's guiding light, the love of Jesus displayed through the generosity of wise men and women. In our homes the children and not so young are also radiant in the light that twinkles in the eye when something wrapped is revealed and the thoughtfulness of the giver is fully appreciated. Have you seen that look in the eyes of your children and grandchildren when they open presents at Christmas and Epiphany? It is the light that brightens the whole world, a light that shines in the darkest winter nights, a light to heal the nations.

In Christ's Service,

Jan P. Lookingbill, Pastor

DATES OF NOTE

- Jan 8-9 High school lock-in (page 8)
- Jan 10 Youth Parents meeting (page 8)
- Jan 11 Fun Bunch Lunch (page 8)
- Jan 14 Study with Har Shalom (page 2)
- Jan 17-18 Confirmation Retreat (page 8)
- Jan 20 Service of Christian Unity with Our Lady of Mercy (page 2)
- Jan 22-24 Ski Trip (page 5)
- Jan 29 Family Movie Night (page 5)
- Jan 30 Treasures of Emmanuel (page 5)
- Jan 31 **Congregational meet - ing and Lunch (page 5)**
- Feb 1 Souper Bowl Sunday (page 4)
- Feb 12-13 Midnight Run (page 6)

WORSHIP

Sunday 8:30 & 11:00
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING WINTER BIBLE ENCOUNTER

Pr. Lookingbill will begin a new study on 6 January at 10:30 a.m. of the Book of James. James is the one book of the New Testament that Martin Luther would have liked excluded! Among the themes of this Christian treatise, delivered as a Christian "wisdom-sermon," is an account of the dispute over "faith and works." It was precisely on this point that Dr. Luther found James problematic and controversial; it seemed to contradict Luther's "justification by faith – alone." Join the group this January to see how this small book of the New Testament might bring clarity to the Lutheran emphasis on God's Grace. If you need transportation, please contact the Church office or Pr. Lookingbill.

Winter Wednesday Evening Study

Pr. Lookingbill will continue the Wednesday evening study with supper at 6:30 and a study that begins at 7:30 of Karen Armstrong's newest book, "The Case for God." This book is her newest of 19 publications and presents an intelligent historical review of religion in the civilizations of humankind as well as a challenge to those atheists in our time who contest the importance of religion. The contest between "faith" and "reason" is hotly debatable, but Karen Armstrong focuses on the "practice" of religion as a means to glimpse the divine, which some call "God." Even if members and friends haven't been able to join the group up to now, you are welcome to come when you are able. We will continue our sessions on 6 January when we will meet for supper in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 and then move to study in the Christian Education room beginning at 7:30. You need not have supper with us to engage in the study. Please let the Church office and the Pastor know you are planning to attend.

JANUARY INTERFAITH STUDY AT HAR SHALOM 14 JANUARY AT 7 P.M.

The first two sessions of the Interfaith Study this year brought 23 people together each evening to study the intriguing Book of Deuteronomy. Pastor Lookingbill reported, "Of the 23 who participated at Emmanuel in December, only 5 were Lutherans from Emmanuel. I am delighted to be a part of such an exciting and unique program as we have with Rabbi Emeritus Leonard Cahan and Har Shalom congregation and we will continue our joint study on 14 January at Har Shalom. I hope that there will be more Lutherans attending and sharing in this special opportunity we have to learn and share our Biblical roots with our Jewish friends."

This year's study began with an overview of the Book of Deuteronomy as a "unique" testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures. Since it was "discovered" by Josiah's priests in 621 B.C. and formed the basis of the sweeping reforms of his kingship, it can possibly be viewed as a "reformation" within the Hebrew community? We continued our study of the significance for Deuteronomy with an in depth look at the "Shema," the ancient call to worship and basic "identifying" creed of the Jewish community. Jesus uses the Shema in his teaching in the New Testament. We are continuing our study with the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy and its influence on the Christian Church.

Join Rabbi Cahan and Pr. Lookingbill for the next Thursday evening meeting of this study and bring along a friend or two to share in our "unique" study of Christian/Jewish thought. If you need transportation to the evening programs, please let the Church office or Pr. Lookingbill know.

AN ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE WITH OUR LADY OF MERCY DURING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

20 JANUARY 2010 AT 7:30 P.M.

FEATURED PREACHER: FR. AVELINO A. GONZALEZ
ASSOCIATE ECUMENICAL OFFICER, ADW
OF THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

Emmanuel is privileged to be the host this year of the annual Worship Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church and Emmanuel have alternated for the past several years with worship for our two congregations. The services and fellowship each year have brought us closer together as we share our Christian heritage and prayers for mutual affirmation of our Christian faith.



Emmanuel News Notes is published eleven times a year by Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 7730 Bradley Blvd, Bethesda, Maryland 20817,
Telephone: (301) 365-5733; Fax: (301) 365-9236
Email: info@elcbethesda.org
website: www.elcbethesda.org

Pastor:
Youth & Family Ministry
Council President
Parish Administrator
Director of Music
Joyful Praise (Children's) Choir

Rev. Jan P. Lookingbill
Rev. Robert L. Lewis
James McGee
Katherine Burrell
Dingwall Fleary
Susan Drumm

From the Council President:

This time last year we were cautiously optimistic. We thought that if December contributions were consistent with the historical pattern we could end up with our first surplus in years and the bequest that had been given to the church could be put into reserves. Instead, the bottom dropped out in December. We ended up revisiting our budget and proposing a 2009 budget with a \$9,000 deficit.

So as of the end of November there is good news and bad news.

The good news is that we could meet our offering budget if offerings in December match those in November. Normally, that would be easy. But these are not normal times.

The bad news is that the budget includes a \$9,000 deficit. In addition, this year we learned that the parsonage, as a rental property, is taxable and consequently we got socked with an \$8,500 unbudgeted tax bill. So meeting our offering target, still leaves us almost \$18,000 in the hole.

But then again, an \$18,000 bump in offerings from November to December is not unusual. But then again, we have lost the 4th Sunday of Advent to a snow storm. So cautiously optimistic is still the mood. But this year the emphasis is on cautious.

But the larger problem is a decline in church attendance and a decline in membership.

On November 22nd, Pastor Phil Hirsch came to Emmanuel. Pastor Hirsch has a long title with the Metro DC synod, but he is charged with helping congregation rejuvenate.

The problems we face are not unique in the ELCA, nor in churches of any stripe. But that is hardly an excuse for inaction.

Pastor Hirsch spoke to the congregation at both services about stewardship. Between services he talked with a group of 20+ interested people about challenges facing congregations and what others have done to respond to those challenges.

At its December meeting, the Council asked both pastors to bring back some ideas to address three areas of concern to the Council. How can we expand our outreach to young families with children?

Are there ways we can improve our worship service that could draw more people back to the church? What other ideas are available to grow our congregation?

We rely on our pastors for leadership. They rely on us for energy and enthusiasm. Anyone with thoughts on these topics should speak directly with the pastors or with any Council member.

Peace and Joy

Jim McGee 1920Jimmy@gmail.com

Christian Education Notes

Sundays

Children and Youth Sunday School - 10 a.m. in the Atrium and Classrooms

January 3 - No Children or Youth Sunday School classes
 January 10 - Welcome Back Party
 January 17 - Regular Sunday School
 January 24 - Regular Sunday School
 January 31 - Extended Opening and then Regular Sunday School

Adult Forum - 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

The Adult Forum is an opportunity to have a Christian discussion on the issues of the day. All are invited.

Adult Bible Study - 10 a.m. in the Parlor

The Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study invites you to join them in the Parlor at 10:00 a.m. They will study prayer in the Bible by looking at ten different prayers that are taught in the Bible. They will use the *Daring to Draw Near: Prayers that Help Us Know Who God Is* (by John White) as a study guide. Bring your Bibles, or pick one up from the shelves in the Parlor and come join in. Ginger Boone will lead the group. Further information may be obtained by calling the church office at 301-365-5733.

Mondays

Confirmation

During January we will begin exploring our faith and the church.

January 4 - Regular Class
 January 11 - Regular Class
 January 17 - 18 - Hallowood Retreat
 January 25 - Regular Class
 February 1 - Regular Class

Wednesdays

Wednesday Morning Bible Encounter with Pastor

Lookingbill 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and enjoy a lively discussion on The Letter of James.

Wednesday Evening Study with Pastor Lookingbill. Supper

at 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall, followed by study in the Christian Education Room at 7:30 p.m. See the description of the study on page 2 of this issue.

Our Garage Sale Was a Huge Success!

Our garage sale on Saturday, November 7 was a huge success. As you know, Thrivent Lutheran offered a dollar for dollar match for any funds raised by Emmanuel for congregational use. The Church Council and Parish Life decided to have a garage sale and the monies raised would go toward updates in the kitchen.

The sale netted \$1,100.00. You gave us plenty of donations and baked goods and we had a wonderful team of volunteers for it to be a success. Vicky Aceto was our "Garage Sale Expert" with great ideas in pricing and selling. Vicky made the two days of organizing and selling lots of fun with her knowledge of yard-sale buying. Anna Roberts, Sue Hunley, Ellen Sarin, Pauline Squier, Patti Leppert, Susan Thronson, and I were the team players to help out in sorting, pricing, and selling. On Saturday, when we opened the doors at 8:00 a.m. we had about 20 people in line waiting to come in. Maybe it had something to do with that big white tablecloth with the words "Church Yard Sale" on it attached to the bushes facing the corner of Seven Locks and Bradley Blvd. Lots of people came through and it was fun to see what people bought and what they paid. We had several different departments; childrens', kitchen ware, books, house wares, sports, electronics, and clothes -- something for everyone. We even had a bake sale and made a pot of coffee for anyone who wanted a cup.

The garage sale was such a hit that we are planning to have one next year. So start saving those unwanted items, we pretty much will accept anything except any large furniture items.

The \$2,200.00 will benefit Emmanuel's members and the many others who use the church kitchen. Parish Life and the Church Council will keep everyone updated on the future kitchen repairs.

Sheila Murtland

[Because of the press of meeting a deadline at Thanksgiving time, this article somehow got left behind in the editor's inbox and missed the December issue. Apologies to Sheila and the garage-sale crew.]

From the Parish Nurse: Happy New Year!

Health Ministry surveys continue to be collected; please complete and return them in person or to my mailbox. The surveys will aid in planning for 2010. In addition, I would like to ask the congregation to think of ideas and ways in which they can serve our growing Health Ministry program. Examples include transportation assistance for fellow members, providing meals after hospitalization or major life event, sewing comfort pillows for hospitalized/home-bound members. I welcome all ideas! Please take some time to contemplate ways in which you may put your faith into service.

So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, also faith without actions is dead. James 2:26.

I believe

I believe the gifts you have are there for you to share
and when you give them from the heart, the whole
world knows you care

I believe that if you give, even to just one,
that gift will grow in magnitude before the day is done
I believe that comfort comes from giving part of me
and if I share with others, there's more for all to see
(Author unknown)

February 7, Sunday

Souper Bowl Sunday

Our youth will hold soup-pots at the church doors on "Souper Bowl Sunday" again this year. They will join more than 15,000 youth groups in churches across the country collecting money to help feed and house the needy. In the last three years we have raised \$1,430 to go toward helping those in need. This year we will be collected to help with the cost of sending youth and adults to the Chi Rho Work Camp in Neon, Kentucky. Just like last year, you will also have a chance to cheer on one of the teams in the Super Bowl by placing your donation in collection pot for that team. You can also choose to donate to the "I don't watch football" pot.

In 2009, Emmanuel's youth joined 13,778 other youth groups to raise \$10,244,799 to help those in need. On Super Bowl Sunday, we will report the amount raised to the Souper Bowl of Caring Headquarters so they can announce the total amount raised during the radio broadcast of the game (we are still hoping that they will announce it during the TV broadcast). Since "Souper Bowl of Caring" became a national grassroots event in 1993, more that \$61 million has gone to help those in need.

Please support the youth of Emmanuel in this effort to "love our neighbors" by dropping a few dollars into the soup-pots on "Souper Bowl Sunday."

Annual Congregational Meeting Newly Combined with Luncheon

On January 31st, Emmanuel will have its Annual Congregational meeting for finance along with a **Luncheon** in the Fellowship Hall. Although in past years, Parish Life served a breakfast between the services, this year there will be an 8:30 a.m. service, followed by coffee hour, Sunday school, and a 11:00 a.m. service. After the 11:00 a.m. service, the Congregational meeting and Luncheon will be held together in the Fellowship Hall. This way the Sunday school teachers can attend the meeting. The Nursery will be opened during the meeting and luncheon. Parish Life will be serving Soup and Sandwiches. If you have any questions or if you would like to help out with the luncheon please call Sheila Murland at 301-983-2683 or email at lakenheathway@aol.com.

What will be considered at the Congregational meeting?

The principal item will be the adoption of a budget for the coming year. This is no simple matter this year; times are tough and Emmanuel is having its problems, too. Please listen to the presentations by Council (January 17 and 24—watch for announcements in the Sunday bulletin) and read the documents to be considered so that you and the congregation can make informed and realistic decisions for the coming year.

SPECTACULAR YOUTH SKI RETREAT

January 22 - 24, 2010
Seven Springs Ski Resort

All youth (and some adult volunteers) are invited to come on the SPECTACULAR Youth Ski Retreat on the weekend of January 22-24, 2010 at Seven Springs Ski Resort, Somerset, PA. We will depart from Emmanuel at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 22 and stop at McDonald's in Breezewood, PA for supper (bring money). We will sleep Friday and Saturday nights at Trinity Lutheran Church in Somerset, PA, ski all day Saturday and Sunday, and return to Emmanuel around 7 p.m. on Sunday, January 24.

You do not have to know how to ski to come on this trip. We will teach you. In fact, it's a great way to learn how to ski, and many of our youth have learned to ski on previous years' trips. The cost is \$180 per person, which includes transportation, lodging, food Saturday and Sunday, and lift tickets. Adult volunteers are needed to help with driving and to assist as mentors. A large van is needed to transport the skis, boots, and poles.

Sign-up packets are available in the Narthex.

If you have any questions, contact Pastor Lewis (301-365-5733).



Family Movie & Potluck Dinner

The Sword in the Stone

January 29, Friday
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Come join us for our monthly movie night. This month we are going to watch the Disney Classic animated movie, *The Sword in the Stone*. This is Disney's classic movie about how the boy who would become king learns important lessons from Merlin and others.

This film is based on T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*. It was also Pastor Lewis' favorite movie when he was growing up (answers a lot of questions doesn't it).

Bring the whole family, bring a couple of friends, bring your pillow to lay on the floor - everyone of any ages is invited. Also, please, bring a dish to share during the potluck dinner.

Parish Vital Records

Births

Theodore Charles, born 30 November 2009 to Sabrina and Michael Depenbrock and great nephew of Jane Rosenquist

Deaths

Kenny Peiffer. Friend of Dottie and Joe Abosso

First Communion

Charlotte Maria Roberts and *Matthew Phillip Weinberg*.
Sunday, November 29

Wedding

Christian Drumm and *Angela Green*, 21 November 2009

Randi Kristin Laegreid and *Jean Martin Pierre-Canel*,
12 December 2009

Transfer

Williams family to Davis Lutheran Church, California

Midnight Run Retreat to Help the Homeless

February 12 - 13, Friday to Saturday

The high school youth will join a small group of people from the Coalition for the Homeless and Luther Place to hand out food and clothing to homeless people living on the street. This is an organized event that has been successfully, and safely, done with youth groups in downtown Washington, D.C. for years.

In order to help out our neighbors in need living in the street, we need your help. No later than January 31st, we will have a box in the narthex to collect items which we will give out to those living on the streets. Below is a list of items we need donated.

Food and Bottled-Water

Granola Bars, cheese&crackers, peanut butter&crackers, apples, banana's and other packaged foods that do not need to be cooked.

Clothing

New Socks, New or Like New gloves or mittens, stocking caps

Toiletries

Soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, lotion

Other Items

Backpacks and small duffle bags

Blankets

NOTE: We cannot accept coats this year.



Dinner Club

Dinner Club groups will be contacted in early January and asked to meet during the week of January 22 - 30, 2010. If you have not signed up to be in a dinner group and would still like to be involved, contact Pastor Lewis before January 8, 2010.

Attention College and Graduate School Students

Work Camp
June 6 - June 12, 2010

Young Adult Mission Trip (Chi Rho Style)

Pastor Lewis is looking for college students for a mission trip/work camp in Neon, Kentucky where we will help in one of the poorest counties in the United States. For those who have gone to Chi Rho in high school, this is the same place. We go expecting to do anything and come away gaining what we did not expect.

This trip is open to all college and grad school students. Please contact Pastor Lewis for an application or more information.

Pastor Lewis considers....change

I recently read an article about an event that happened in early September last year in the small South Pacific island nation of Samoa that attracted the attention of people around the world. Perhaps it was the sheer audacity of the enterprise, or the stupidity of it or the gratuitous nature of it. Whatever it was, people noticed.

It was audacious, but it was not stupid, and in some ways it was necessary. Samoa became the first country in more than 40 years to change driving lanes. That is, Samoa decided that they would no longer drive on the RIGHT side of the road. As of September 14, 2009, they would begin motoring down the highway and back country roads on the LEFT side. The government said it wanted to bring the country in line with New Zealand and Australia to encourage Samoans in those countries to ship used cars home to relatives.

Can you imagine what that Monday morning back in September must have been like? Think of yourself as a driver getting out of the house, and for the first time in your life, you are going to start driving on the left. If I did that, I would be wearing a crash helmet, padded clothing, and be strapped in like you would not believe. I would drive no faster than 30 miles per hour, praying fervently as I rounded blind curves that the drivers coming my way remembered which lane they were supposed to be in.

To make the transition as safe as possible, the Samoan authorities did their homework. There was strenuous debate, of course. Then the government widened roads — to give drivers more room to swerve and avoid each other. It added new signs. It declared a two-day national holiday beginning with the day of the switch to reduce traffic on the roads. It also banned the sale of alcohol for three days prior to the switch!

One of the most important things it did was to get the church involved. On Sunday, the day before the switch, the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, the nation's largest denomination, prayed for the driving conversion to go smoothly and offered blessings for all those who would be on the roads the next morning.

The switch was to take place at 6:00 a.m. Monday morning. And so it began, with onlookers lining the streets cheering loudly and offering their applause for the idiots, I mean brave souls, who were actually going to put their lives on the line, go through with this conversion and start driving in a different lane.

The miracle is that on day one, not a single accident was reported!

So here I am. It's the new year and the Holy Spirit invites us to get in a different lane and start a new driving adventure. This is what a conversion is like: moving from the lane in which I have been driving in all my life and then fearfully and cautiously, but with hope, switch to a completely new lane.

To make this work, everything must change. We must think differently. We must have an entirely different frame of mind, being utterly intentional about every movement while at the same time being aware of the movement of others. We must drive a different car, or at least one that is equipped differently.

And, if it is hard enough for me to do this as a person who is reasonably in control of will and choices, think of the difficulty of an entire nation attempting to change lanes. One need only think of the debate about health care. Whether we should or should not, it is simply hard in America to effect dramatic, sweeping change. So many drivers on the road want to make the rules or be a part of the discussion.

It is hard to change our ways, whether as a nation or as individuals. It requires an incredible application of will, determination and passion. And this brings us to the question of what conversion is, or at least, what kind of conversion I'm talking about here.

In the Scripture, the call to conversion often is addressed not to the "heathens" but to people of faith, the people of God. "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). It is amazing that we can be a people of God and can be "called by my name," yet still be an unconverted people - people in need of "turning" from wicked ways?

There are all types of conversions: intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist, coercive and probably more. But most scholars of this phenomenon agree that the single most important element of conversion is change, often radical change, in which we are changed for the better. William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience* said it is a change in the "habitual center of [a person's] personal energy through which religious ideas take a central place in a person's consciousness."

What is important is that the idea of conversion is not simply for those people "out there" who are unchurched and nonbelievers. Conversion is very much a subject for us to address as we confront people, including ourselves, in the conversation about our "driving habits."

We need to pull the car over. Pray. Listen for instructions. Take some time off. Stay sober.

And then move our lives over into another lane.

PAX,

Pastor Robert L. Lewis, Jr.

Youth and Family Calendar

January 8 - 9, Friday - Saturday

High School Lock-in at Mar-Lu-Ridge

This is the first High School Youth event of the new year. All High School Youth are invited to this lock-in that will be full of surprises (such as a zip-line) as we head up to Mar-Lu-Ridge overnight. We will meet in the church parking lot at 4 p.m. on Friday and should be back on Saturday around 4 p.m. The cost of the retreat is \$25 each. Also, bring money to get supper on the way up to the mountain.

January 10, 10:15 a.m., Sunday

Youth Parents' Meeting

Please join Pastor Lewis for a short, but important meeting about youth and family ministry programs for the first quarter of 2010. Grab coffee and a pastry and then come to the meeting in the Christian Education Room.

January 11, Noon, Monday

Fun Bunch

Come join us for a catered meal and fellowship as we gather for lunch and a presentation about famous Stained Glass Windows.

January 17 - 18, Sunday - Monday

Confirmation Retreat

This is our annual Confirmation Retreat at Hallwood. We will leave after church on Sunday afternoon, stop for lunch, and then head to Hallwood. We plan on returning to the church on Monday around 2 p.m.

January 22 - 24, Friday - Sunday

Youth Ski Retreat

Come join our annual Youth Ski Retreat as we head off to hit the slopes at Seven Springs. Packets for the ski retreat are available in the narthex. The cost is \$180 per person. Adult volunteers are still needed. More information is found on page 5 in this issue.

January, 29, 6:30 p.m. Friday

Family Movie and Potluck

Come join us for our monthly movie night. This month we are going to watch the Disney Classic animated movie, *The Sword in the Stone*. Bring something to share for the potluck. Bring the whole family. Bring a friend or two. See page 5 in this issue for more information.

January 31, 12:30 p.m. Sunday

Congregational Meeting

All youth and their families are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. Confirmed youth are voting members of the congregation and those in confirmation class should understand how their church functions. There will be lunch provided at the meeting.

February 7, Sunday

Souper Bowl Sunday

Our youth will hold soup-pots at the church doors on "Souper Bowl Sunday" again this year to collect funds to help those in need. Please see the write-up on page 4 in this issue for more information.

February 12 - 13, Friday to Saturday

Midnight Run Retreat to Help the Homeless

The high school youth will join a small group of people from the *Coalition for the Homeless* and *Luther Place* to hand out food and clothing to homeless people living on the street. This is an organized event that has been successfully, and safely, done with youth groups in downtown Washington, D.C. for years. Please see page 8 in this issue for more information.

Mark Your Calendars

Pancake Dinner - February 16

Chili Cook-off and Wii Challenge - February 28

TOGETHER IN MISSION

"Break Down the Barriers"

Saturday, January 9, 2010

Time & Location:

King of Kings Lutheran Church
Fairfax, Virginia

Registration begins at 8 a.m.~Closing Worship begins at 2 p.m.
(childcare available)

Keynote Speaker:

The Rev. Carol Howard Merritt
Author of "Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing
Generation"

Cost per person: \$20

Check out this fabulous slate of workshops!

Advance your congregation's tools and contribute to discussion of topics like: Why are there so few men in our church? What sort of cultural changes are happening in a new generation? How can we grow in sharing our own faith? How will I take care of my elder parents? Why is giving money to the church such a problem? And many more . . .



He who sings
scares away his woes.
Cervantes

Greetings!

From Fleary/Miller family to yours, it is our hope that you had a most joyous Christmas season, and that the snow storm of '09 only added beauty to it.

All of the musical events prepared for the celebrations at Emmanuel were presented as planned, and were well received. (Not so lucky were the McLean Symphony concerts and the numerous "Nutcracker" performances throughout the area which had to be cancelled due to the storm!) I am very thankful to the many singers who came to augment the choir last month for its cantata, "Nativity Suites". The sound that can be produced by a chorus of 25 to 30 voices is very enjoyable to those who hear it, and a thrill to me as a conductor. I am most appreciative of the hard work and participation of everyone involved.

We now look forward to this post-Christmas period and Epiphany because so much rich and wonderful music will be played and heard. The sources and traditions of some of this rich and familiar music could be the subject of an entire series of columns, a project which I might consider sometime in the future. The hymns, anthems and other selections during our services will draw from these as well as more contemporary writers.

As has been the case quite frequently, I must again urge you to seriously consider lending your God-given talent – even if you don't think it's there – to continuing and strengthening the music of Emmanuel. I've stated this before, but it must be repeated: the music ministry is in critical need of new participants. Even with the best of intentions, from time to time it becomes necessary for current members of both the bell choir and the adult singers to divide their time between the duties of the church with the demands of their families and their personal lives. It is a vital necessity that new individuals and fresh faces come and add new vigor to Emmanuel's music programs. You feel good about giving to others through your service, and you'll enjoy the experience, to say nothing of social interactions with other Christians!

Finally, please be aware that Treasures of Emmanuel, the annual event scheduled for the end of January, will be delayed until further notice. Please stay tuned for an update.

Until next time, I am
Faithfully yours,
Dingwall Fleary
dingwallfleary@verizon.net



A cold clear morning often means that the car windshield is heavily encrusted with frost. Sometimes the scraper smoothly dislodges the stuff and one is soon on one's way. Other times, the frost seems to have bonded with the glass so fiercely that it takes all one's strength to free the window. What is different? It's probably not the temperature and probably not the cleanliness of the window surface, but the action of Murphy's law. Somehow, the window sensed that you were running late or that some other emergency was calling you. Perhaps, if we sneak up on the windshield with kind thoughts, the frost will leave easily and quickly.....maybe not.



Have you noticed how low in the sky the sun seems, even at noon? Did it always seem to hang so low? As children we noticed that the sun was out or that it was not, but somehow it never really registered that it was so low to the horizon in winter. Did your teacher try to explain the seasons by using a flashlight as the sun and an orange as the earth? It worked after a fashion, but when she tried to explain that we were on the orange, her arms would get tired and somehow the earth usually fell out of orbit. Poor woman! What would she do in the age of space exploration?



We worry about global warming, about high cholesterol, about peace in our time, about deficits and calamities, about floods and draughts, forest fires and blizzards, about all sorts of things over which we have little or no control. Yet few of us note that there are lots of things over which we have no control and about which we don't worry at all: the sun comes up in the east each day whether we can see it or not, the barest trees will soon begin to show their swelling buds and spring will arrive, birds will return and fill the air with their melodies, and love abounds. Maybe we should think more about the things we don't worry about.



Not all birds migrate south for the winter. In Rockville, we have a colony (a murder, a plague, a gang, a parliament) of crows that spend the night somewhere near Montrose Road and the Rockville Pike. Each morning, they fly west to feed in the fields west of the urban area. At least, that appears to be what they're off to, but what it really seems like is a flowing stream of political commentators, each with a raucous opinion on whatever comes to mind—and delivered at volumes that might register on the Richter scale. Each bird speaks over its neighbor's voice, some shrill and piercing, some booming in bass registers. Like TV commentators, they never seem to reach a conclusion.

EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

7730 Bradley Boulevard
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Phone: (301) 365-5733
Fax: (301) 365-9236
Email: info@elcbethesda.org

Jan P. Lookingbill, Pastor

Robert Lewis, Pastor
Youth & Family Ministry

James McGee, Council President
Katherine Burrell, Parish Administrator
Dingwall Fleary, Director of Music
Susan Drumm, Joyful Praise Choir
Ligia Benjumea, Nursery Attendant

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bethesda, MD 20817
Permit No. 2772

Current Resident or

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.ELCBETHESDA.ORG

JANUARY, 2010

