



THE
Messenger

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Washington, DC



GIVING THANKS FOR WHAT IS COMING

by Pastor Renata Eustis

Advent always seems to sneak up on me and catch me by surprise. I think it's because the first Sunday of Advent is often the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. Here it is again, and I feel pulled between gratitude for all that has been given to me and looking forward to what is coming. Not a bad place to be at all!

I was recently challenged to think of gratitude in a new way. It's relatively easy to be grateful for all the things I would call "good" in my life—things like my health, my family, my faith. The challenge is to be grateful for all that is in my life right now—even the difficult aspects I wish were different. Even the very hard and painful aspects offer something, some possibility of growth. This idea of being grateful for all

that is reminded me of the call to "give thanks to God at all times and for everything" (*Ephesians 5:20*). It's not easy to do it but there's something vital there.

The pull of Advent is toward the coming of Christ—the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the coming of Christ when the Reign of God comes in its fullness and the coming of Christ in our lives right now.

I see us, as a congregation, in an Advent time now. We are waiting for something new to be born. We have come through a long process of the renovation of our space and we are beginning a process of renovating our mission. With the guidance of Pr. Phil Hirsch from the Metro DC Synod staff, we are in a process of seeking God's direction for our focus. How can we use this space in ways that reach out to those around us with the good news that God loves the world and came so that everyone might have abundant life? There are many different directions we could go—but what we are seeking is a focus that can unify us and help us grow.

We are in a time of prayerful preparation. It's both an exciting and a nerve-wracking time—depending on your perspective and temperament. We can nurture this process by actively participating in it. We can nurture this process by fervently praying for it. But just like with the birth of a baby, we cannot command it to happen or know exactly what it will look like.

Advent is a time of trusting—trusting in the One who promised that a child *would be born*. God has been so faithful to us. May we trust that God will show us the path and that somehow Christ will be incarnated in a new way among us and through us. And may God help us to be grateful for being in *this* place.

Looking for a way to be refreshed spiritually during the hustle and bustle of this season?

Mark Advent by coming to
Contemplative Prayer
Wednesdays
7:30 – 8 a.m.
Wenchel Chapel.

'TIS THE SEASON OF ANTICIPATION!

By Vicar Joel Richter

Christmas time is here! Everything starts with the pinnacle event of Black Friday sales allowing for Christmas to be upon us. In the next month or so, everyone goes to holiday parties enjoying a celebration amongst friends possibly giving gifts and donating money to charity expressing our heartfelt joy. When I was a kid, I always loved the month of December. In school, we had Christmas concerts with beautiful music. It seemed like the Christmas season had arrived, yet it had not.

Somewhere in my teenage years, I was pondering the 12 days of Christmas from that lovely song about getting 12 days of gifts. (If anyone wants to give me gifts for 12 days, I am not opposed to the idea.) What struck me about the song involved when did the 12 days of Christmas start. I thought that it was probably December 13 or 14 because it was the 12 days before Christmas or maybe they got it wrong and it is the whole month of December. To me, this made sense. Then I found out that it started on December 25 going until Epiphany. This

made no sense because Christmas season starts in the beginning of December.

Then I discovered that 'Tis the season of Advent and anticipation. What is Advent to us? It is the season of anticipation. We are anticipating the coming of Christ not only a reminder of the Christ birth, but also an anticipation Christ coming again.

In this anticipation, we experience the feeling of already but not yet. We already know of Christ's coming the first time. We have already experienced it in the sacrament of Holy Communion and other ways in our lives. In the midst of this, we wait. We wait for Christ to come again. We wait to hear the story of our Savior again.

As we approach December, we celebrate Advent. We are celebrating the waiting for Christmas to arise. During this Advent season, I request you to take time like I do to enjoy the anticipation of what is to come!

ADVENT SERVICE OF COMFORT & HOPE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 10:30 A.M.
WENCHEL CHAPEL

This service is for anyone, but especially for those who know that this Christmas will be a difficult time--whether it be because of the loss or illness of loved one, a broken relationship, painful memories or any other reason.

DOROTHY ARMSTRONG REMEMBERED May 27, 1918 – November 8, 2009

Dorothy Pfluger Armstrong was baptized at Christ Lutheran Church and her ashes are interred in our Memorial Garden. Dorothy's professional life was full of accomplishments

but we know her as a loved and respected member of our congregation. This article highlights words spoken at Dorothy's funeral service on November 18, 2009.

Phil Hecht used a striking metaphor to describe Dorothy's life as threaded into CLC. Dorothy was a bridge – in a majestic, historical, mundane and, most important, personal sense. For those of you who wonder about using a bridge metaphor to describe someone who was so decidedly earthbound in her last years, read on to understand.

Some bridges are marvels of architecture and engineering: the Golden Gate and Chesapeake Bay bridges come to mind, bridges that span great geographical distances. Like those bridges, Dorothy's ninety-one years spanned almost the entire arc of our congregation's history, from her baptism in 1918 at our first home on New Jersey Avenue, to her participation in Sunday School in that building, to her witnessing the building of this new sanctuary in 1931, to her life-long presence in our pews – always fifth row, pulpit side – to the imminent interment of her ashes right outside these walls in the Memorial Garden. There is a very real sense in which Dorothy was and always will be part of it all.

In her lifetime, Dorothy served as this kind of bridge for the important events and significant changes in our congregation. From her participation in the campaign to build the Parish Hall in 1955, to her vocal support for our decision to become a "Reconciling in Christ" congregation in 1989, to her wise leadership in our decision to establish Transitional Housing Corporation in 1990, to chairing the History Committee for our centennial celebration in 1992, to her somewhat impatient encouragement of the Visioning process that led to the renovation of the spaces in which we now gather, there is a very real sense in which Dorothy did it all. She was a bridge that brought us from where we were to where we are today.

Joanne Noll recalled childhood memories of Dorothy. (Joanne) said "I've been here at Christ Church most of my life, but not my whole life like Dorothy. Both Dorothy and her father were Sunday School teachers,

and I had them both. Through second grade we went to Sunday School in the chapel. This was before the Parish Hall was built; before almost everything. It was just the barebones original building. Then in third grade we got to go downstairs into what we now call the undercroft. Dorothy was very much her father's daughter--a small person with a big voice! Her mom was a very quiet lady. Dorothy called them Momma and Poppa. Dorothy has reminded me over the years that she was one of my Sunday School teachers. I was always chicken to ask her why I was so memorable! Just before confirmation I had her father, Mr. Pfluger, for a teacher. We all remember his voice and the hymns we learned in Sunday School. "What A Friend we have in Jesus" was one we sang a lot with Dorothy and her father leading."

And from Pastor's message at Dorothy's service: Dorothy knew her place. She knew her place as God's beloved child, baptized into a way of life that was marked by a serving love for others. But she also knew that she was one of many children—a world full. The reason that Dorothy did not go to college earlier was that during her working years, she was also taking care of her parents. Dorothy had a clear sense of the place caring for her parents had in her life. This was what she needed to be doing at this time—and as far as I could tell, she did not harbor any resentment or feelings of bitterness about what she had given up to do this.

During a Bible study we were talking about what difference it made that Jesus died and rose from the dead, given that we still die. She said that the power of the resurrection was that it was possible not to fear death. She allowed that she was afraid of pain but not of death.

Dorothy knew that her place on this earth was significant but not permanent. Her life bore witness to the gift of that kind of acceptance. In life and in death she trusted the One who promised to prepare a place for her—and she knew that there is a place for all of us, too. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Psalm 90:15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Mack Ott

Advent is the glorious season of preparing for our Lord's birth. It is also, by definition, *beginning* in the broadest sense. Here as the calendar year closes, we in Christ Church have many things to celebrate that are beginning:

- The newly renovated spaces—lights, ramps, heat and silent AC—and looking forward to the completion of the external ramp in the spring, for which the permits have been issued. For this final component of making the sanctuary and fellowship hall accessible to all, we thank the Heitmuller family and the bequest in remembrance of Mary Louise.
- Bequests from Dorothy Armstrong and Arnold Hespe are redounding to CLC's benefit in anticipation of reducing the mortgage and its servicing costs. We remember their support and bless their generosity in creating a brighter advent for many years to come.
- A new tenant—THC—in the old counting room, helping CLC to make ends meet financially, facilitating—and celebrating—its own new grants from the DC Council to underwrite its expansion of transitional housing.
- New officers on Council—Mark Rohrbaugh (recording secretary), David Blakemore (moving from CLC's bookkeeper, to be financial secretary), Sven Kraemer (deacon), Mark Sharp

(deacon). We thank them for their joining the Council during 2010-11. We celebrate the service of Lynn Hommeyer (recording secretary), Sheila Bell (deacon), Evan Gidney (deacon), and Pennie Noll (financial secretary, to become the CLC bookkeeper). We also gratefully celebrate and welcome to another term on Council Artie Harris (treasurer).

- The improved and improving CLC website—www.christlutheran-dc.org—and shouting out to the world from its new posting on CLC's sign on 16th Street.

Let us include these new beginnings in our celebration of the Lord's coming in this Advent season.

CLC COUNCIL MEMBERS 2010

President -- Mack Ott
Vice President – Joanne Noll
Treasurer – Artie Harris
Financial Secretary – David Blakemore
Recording Sec'y -- Mark Rohrbaugh
Deacon -- Sven Kraemer
Deacon – Zacchaeus Odebode
Deacon – Mark Sharp
Deacon – Matt Rist

The new council will be installed in January 2010.



ALTERNATIVE GIFT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

By Alice Meyer and Hetty Irmer

Gifts of Hope, the alternative gift-giving program in the Metropolitan Washington, DC, Synod (ELCA), is starting its 18th season. Since 1992, over \$2,000,000 has been raised to help people in need in our community and around the world! And every

penny received has gone directly to the beneficiaries.

Instead of buying a material gift for someone, a Gift of Hope is a purchase of a mission opportunity in your recipient's name. They vary in price from \$5 (ice cream treats for needy children or a basket of books for Southeast Ministry) to \$250 (a week of summer camp for one child).

For each gift you purchase, you receive three items, which you can give to your friend, family member, coworker, or anyone you would like:

- A card – a Christmas card or an all-occasion card.
- An envelope
- An insert describing your chosen alternative gift

The actual gift will be delivered by the designated ministry or organization to the beneficiary (for example, bread and milk for children in El Salvador).

Each congregation can select an additional organization as their #40. Once again, Christ Lutheran is adding additional items that Transitional Housing Corporation (THC) needs for their programs.

THC is listed in the main catalog with the Child/Teen Wellness Program (\$50) and Reading Club Books (\$20). We will add several other items. If an item appeals to you but you don't want to give the full amount, that's okay. Whatever amount you give will be applied to that item.

Materials are available now for those who are planning ahead for Christmas or have a special occasion coming soon. If you have questions, contact Alice Meyer (phone 301-650-2292 or email bannerz@starpower.net).

Another option for Alternative Christmas gifts is to sponsor a student from the Rwanda School Project (www.rwandaschoolproject.org), one of the recipients of our Yard Sale. The cost is \$1,200 per year, which can be paid in installments according to the school trimesters. The Higgins-Irmer household

(Brian, Hetty and Clementine) want to sponsor a student, and would like to share the cost with one or more other households. If you are interested in this option, please contact Hetty (hirmer@verizon.net or cell 301-442-9423). The director of the school, Robin Strickler, will match us with a particular student. If there is enough interest, perhaps CLC members can sponsor more than one student!

AN IDEA FOR GIFT GIVING: TITHING YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT BUDGET

By Hetty Irmer

As we enter the Christmas Gift season, I want to offer an idea that our household has adopted the past few years: we establish our Christmas Gift-giving budget, and tithe 10% to give to our recipient of choice. It has been a nice way for us to balance the "consumerism" of gift-giving with the Spirit of the season, and it gives us satisfaction in knowing that our Christmas gift money doesn't just stay in the family, so to speak. While we hope to increase this amount in future years, it is a good way for us to begin to shift from giving out of expectation to giving out of thanksgiving and a sense of abundance, however modest.

THRIVENT BUILDS EL SALVADOR

By Marty Jewett



Greg Roemer organized a Thrivent Builds trip to El Salvador which Sharon Kelly and Marty Jewett from CLC joined. It was a fascinating experience building houses with Habitat in Santa Ana as well as trips to Day of the Dead celebrations at a cemetery (sort of tailgate party on family grave with most every grave decorated), the Mayan ruins, a lovely volcanic crater lake and thermal pools

(El Salvador has 25 volcanoes-a lot for a country the size of New Jersey! El Salvador is the only country I know named after Jesus. The last day was a fun beach day that became harrowing when the flood following Hurricane Ida overflowed the river 5 km away and filled up our bungalows in minutes. Getting out the doors was difficult - climbing trees to escape the currents challenged even strong swimmer Sharon. Huey helicopters from the Red Cross lifted us out but what a mess to leave behind--ruined homes and farms, families without a place to sleep, drinking water, and food. The Marriott in San Salvador gave us reduced rates and free laundry- the hot shower was much appreciated.

The amazing fun of the work on the houses included learning simple building techniques, digging deep holes for septic systems and gray water, mixing or sieving the concrete with the right amount of gravel or sand, sealing the cement block walls, sanding with a flat rock, painting, placing roof beams and corrugated roof ,etc. We worked with masons who started the day with devotions in Spanish, and patiently showed us how to cut and twist rebar to strengthen the houses against earthquake damage.



Saturday we worked with 4 university students who were learning trades for the first time--some of them had never held a shovel, and 10 volunteers from a local Lutheran church who sadly would never be able to afford the houses they were helping to build as the \$7500 mortgage on these 2 bedroom homes was beyond their reach. Sunday we went to service at the church and gave the volunteers small piles of rice and beans as our contribution to the meals we would share.

The family whose house we were building came and worked, the Grandmother in her fancy lace apron hauling rock as well as the

rest. The finished houses were beautifully landscaped with bananas, eggplants, papaya, hibiscus; we were proudly given a tour of the 7000th house built in El Salvador by Habitat.

The relationships built were strong and endearing among our group as well as the town people and masons. Sharon was able to use her Spanish wonderfully and enthralled many with her ebullient spirit, I would highly recommend Thrivent build trips for learning about a different culture, making wonderful friends and having an unforgettable journey!



THEOLOGICAL BOOK CLUB

The Theological Book Club shared the review of **The Great Emergence** by Phyllis Tickle with the Adult Forum in November. Follow-on discussion will continue during Adult Forum in December.

CHRISTMAS WITH ST. DYSMAS FAMILIES

By Joanne Noll

The Community of St. Dysmas is an ELCA congregation in the Maryland prison system. Help make Christmas happy for families waiting for their loved ones to be released from prison. This year, because of his illness, Joe Weber would like to distribute grocery and department store gift cards of any denomination you choose. K-Mart, Walmart, Target, Giant and Safeway are stores that are available in the Baltimore area. Please give your gift cards to Joanne by December 13 to allow time to deliver to Joe for distribution to these families. Thanks for your gifts of cheer!

THANKS FOR THE SOFT SEDILIA SEAT

By Marilyn Zukel

Have you seen the sedilia (seh-DEE-lee-ah) lately? What is it — flower, plant, animal, musical instrument or “none of the above”? Traditionally, the Latin word sedilia means seats used by worship leaders. Look to the left of the altar where the assisting ministers sit, the sedilia, which is made of cement, has a new comfortable blue cushion made by Joanne Noll. Thank you, Joanne, from all of us, especially the assisting ministers.

SILENT AUCTION HAD ACTION!

By Joanne Noll

The items donated for auction this year (October 25 and November 1) were many and varied including dinners, baked cakes, pies, and other desserts, a tapas party, beach weekends, chorale tickets, yard work, a load of firewood, fresh garden vegetables, items made by the children, hand knit items, holiday baskets, and on and on. "Time With Miss Linda" (4 hours with up to 3 kids) was a hot item with back and forth bidding. Another "biggie" was Tim's homemade wine!!

With the holidays approaching items are already being "called in" so the year-round fun has begun! Total funds received including \$1020 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans was \$2852. We will use this funding to help furnish the Fellowship Hall and for other items around the building. Let's do it again next year!

The Silent Auction is a buzz following the bidding as winners connect with their treasures and coordinate delivery. Here are a couple of special Silent Auction moments. **Janet Kelly** was highest bidder on **Sadie Cheston-Harris's** potholders. Below is part of the emails exchanged between the two. Dear **Ms. Janet**, this is **Sadie**. Thank you for buying my potholders for the Silent Auction. Please tell me what colors you would like. I will work on them during Thanksgiving vacation. Do you want two that are the same or different? I look forward to making two potholders for you! Sadie (age 7)

Dear Sadie, I'm so excited to be the winner of your potholders! It is very generous of you to work so hard to donate them to the Silent Auction. I like yellow and blue and white. Two different ones would be fun if that's not too much trouble!

Thank you for making them for me.

Fondly, Ms. Janet

Another conversation overheard at Coffee Hour **Marty Jewett** to **Bob Sylwester**: "The only problem with building houses with Habitat in El Salvador was that I missed the Silent Auction. I wanted to win your vegetables!"



THE EAR OF CHRIST

Rita Stroberg at age 96 has made an amazing recovery from her fall in early October when she broke several facial bones. She is currently at Genesis-Woodside, 9101 2nd Avenue, Room 210-A, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Her phone number is 240-485-2068. She welcomes mail, phone calls and visits.

From **Sandy Smith**: I was in India for two weeks earlier this month, one week for a conference in New Delhi and the second doing some sightseeing, since this was my first time there. Saw the Taj Mahal, of course; spent four days touring Rajasthan, which included riding an elephant up to the Amber Fort; and concluded with some time in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) at the home of an Indian woman who attended graduate school with me in St. Louis and whom I hadn't seen in over 30 years.

Janet and Dean Kelly enjoyed a visit to Venice, CA, with Bryan, Amy and 2-year-old Zachary at the end of October. Among the highlights of the visit was accompanying Zachary to the pumpkin farm to pick out the perfect pumpkins for Jack-O-Lanterns and getting a special preview of Zachary's fireman costume for Halloween! We're looking forward to the California Kellys coming east after Christmas.

The Kelly family is grateful for the rescue of **Sharon Kelly** and **Marty Jewett** from the floodwaters in El Salvador following the wake of Hurricane Ida in early November. Sharon and Marty were volunteering in ES with Thrivent Builds International.

Gary Jones, Jr, nephew of **Linda Ott**, suffered severe head trauma in August this year when he was thrown from his dirt bike. He is making steady progress but is not yet able to return to school; he turned 17 in September so his junior year in high school has been interrupted by this unfortunate accident. Gary Jr has been in our prayers since the accident. He was not physically injured but the head trauma has caused some brain damage that we pray will heal or correct itself over time. Linda and her family are grateful for your prayers.



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

November 29th
First Sunday of Advent, 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 2nd –
Contemplative Prayer, 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.,
Wenchel Chapel
Bible Study, Prayer, Holy Communion &
Lunch, 10:30 a.m.

December 6th
Second Sunday of Advent, 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 9th-
Contemplative Prayer, 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.,
Wenchel Chapel

Bible Study, Prayer, Holy Communion &
Lunch, 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 12th
Advent Service of Comfort & Hope, 10:30
a.m., Wenchel Chapel
Kids' Advent Party, 3:00 p.m.
Christmas Caroling & Potluck, 6:00 p.m.

December 13th
– Third Sunday of Advent, 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 16th-
Contemplative Prayer, 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.,
Wenchel Chapel
Bible Study, Prayer, Holy Communion &
Lunch, 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 19th
Memorial Service for **Ruth Sea** , 11:00
a.m. (at Hope Lutheran Church, 4604
Ravensworth Road, Annandale, VA 22003)

Ordination of former vicar **Christine
Stephan**, 2:00 p.m. (at Bethlehem Lutheran
Church, 8922 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax,
VA 22031)

December 20th -
Fourth Sunday of Advent, 10:30 a.m.
Greening of the Church, following worship

Wednesday, December 23rd-
Contemplative Prayer, 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.,
Wenchel Chapel
No Bible Study

Christmas Eve – Festival Candlelight
Service of Holy Communion, 7:30 p.m.,
Prelude Music begins at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day – Celebration of the Birth of
Our Lord, a service of Holy Communion with
carols 10:30 a.m.

December 27th - First Sunday after
Christmas, Holy Communion, Lessons &
Carols, 10:30 a.m.



New Year's Day – Agape Service with
Breakfast, 10:30 a.m.

January 3rd – Epiphany Pageant, 10:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER TREASURER'S REPORT

By Artie Harris

| | <u>Operating Profit/Loss Through November (42% thru FY '10)</u> | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | <u>November</u> | <u>July-Nov</u> | <u>FY Budget</u> | <u>% of Budget</u> |
| Income w/o AIC & YS | \$17,695 | \$91,658 | \$248,800 | 37% |
| AIC Income | \$7,468 | \$66,508 | \$106,152 | 63% |
| Yard Sale Income | \$4,774 | \$34,507 | \$33,000 | 105% |
| Total Expenses | <u>(\$55,569)</u> | <u>(\$194,116)</u> | <u>(\$435,417)</u> | 45% |
| Net Income | <u>(\$25,632)</u> | <u>(\$1,443)</u> | <u>(\$47,465)</u> | |

Notes:

1) The yard sale funds were paid out this month to Social Ministry recipients, resulting in a larger than normal total monthly expenses.

2) As you may recall, the approved budget for this fiscal year is to end with a deficit of \$47,465; the deficit would be paid from reserves.

3) Based on the results of the first five months of this fiscal year (July through November), which show that we are running a deficit of only \$1,443, it appears that we should not exceed a net income of -\$47,465 by fiscal year end--June 30, 2010.

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Come, Lord Jesus, come and be born in our hearts

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