



Christmas Edition 2010

# THE M e s s e n g e r

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Washington, DC

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FROM THE MESSENGER TEAM

The *Messenger* is CLC’s primary paper source for news about our congregation and community. The publication team works to make the newsletter informative and of value to our readers.

Want to go paperless and receive the *Messenger* electronically? Let the church office know and look for the *Messenger* on CLC’s website [www.christlutheran-dc.org/pdf/messenger.pdf](http://www.christlutheran-dc.org/pdf/messenger.pdf).

Looking for an old *Messenger*? Back issues from July 2008 to the present are on our website [www.christlutheran-dc.org/pdf/messengerarchive.html](http://www.christlutheran-dc.org/pdf/messengerarchive.html)

Have something for the next edition? Send it to [CLCMessenger@gmail.com](mailto:CLCMessenger@gmail.com)



## WITHOUT FEAR

*by Pastor Renata Eustis*

A few years ago, our seminary intern at the time, Gretchen, said, “Why don’t we have a Confession on Christmas Eve?” I mumbled something about it being a festive celebration and that Confession seemed like kind of a mood-dampener. With great conviction, Gretchen said, “I really think we need to have a Confession—especially because this might be the only time all year some people hear that their sins are forgiven.” I knew she was right and we’ve begun with the Confession ever since.

Christmas is all about God coming close to us with immense, yet vulnerable, love. Though we hate our vulnerability—seeing it only as what makes it possible for us to be hurt—it is our vulnerability that makes us feel close to each other. Just a few weeks ago, an elderly cousin asked me a question I couldn’t find a way around. I couldn’t lie and I wound up sharing deeply about a painful part of my life. Later I received a letter from her saying how much closer she felt to me because I had shared my pain.

When I think about what motivated me to share, it was mostly not being able to lie. But it was also because I trusted her to respond compassionately rather than judging me harshly. She did and the trust between us has grown—an unexpected gift that has given me the encouragement I needed to change.

“Trusting in Jesus Christ, who came to share our humanity and bring light to this broken world, let us come before God without fear to make our confession.” That is how our Confession begins. We trust that God, who took on all of our humanness—the vulnerability, the weakness—loves us as we are. Just as we feel closer to each other when we honestly share how it is with us, we feel closer to God through confession. The facades come down and our relationship is real. We open ourselves to a deeper relationship and the healing and change that comes.

“Fear not” is God’s word to us through the angel. Let us come to God without fear, bringing the gift of our honest selves and receiving the gift of God’s all-forgiving love and acceptance. It may be the best way we could celebrate Christmas!

## A SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT

On **February 4-5, 2011**, we’ll be doing a new thing!

The members of the Church Council and **all interested CLC members** will gather for an overnight retreat. We’ll have the chance to pray, think and talk together about our future focus. Among the many things we could be doing to share the Gospel, what is it that we are drawn to do in the next year? Pastor Phil Hirsch, the synod’s Director for Evangelical Mission will co-lead this retreat with me. We are currently working out the details of location and will get that information out in early January. The timing will be Friday evening through Saturday supper. We hope people will be able to stay overnight but want to encourage you to come, even if it is only for Saturday. Please talk to Pr. Renata if you are interested or have questions. And if you are at all interested, please come!

Members of the Church Council for 2010 and 2011 met on December 14. They enjoyed a holiday pot luck and fellowship prior to a joint Council meeting.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE –OUR INCOMING COUNCIL PRESIDENT

### WELCOME NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

*By Marilee Rist, Incoming President*

Recently I've been reflecting on the power of language in the Lord's Prayer. Our Lord taught us to pray, "*Our Father.....Give us this day our daily bread.....Forgive us our sins.....*" He taught us to pray *together*. In doing so, we find ourselves drawn powerfully into the community of all the saints. No matter how alone, lonely, or frightened we might be, when we recite the Lord's Prayer, we are comforted and strengthened by our God-nourishing bonds of faith and community with one another. How different it would be in the first-person singular: "My Father.....Give me my daily bread....." and so on. How selfish. How inward. How isolating.

We at Christ Lutheran Church are blessed to be part of this great community of believers of every time and place. As individuals, we are limited. Together we are strong. The strength of community is evidenced in the ongoing work of CLC. A visitor said to me not long ago, "What an active congregation!" And so we are. Together, we serve our neighbors, our community, and our Lord in ways none of us could accomplish on our own.

As the newly elected CLC president, I want to thank you for your contributions – whether of time, energy, or finances -- to making our parish strong. I also want to thank the other new Council Members who were elected at the Congregational Meeting on December 12. **Sven Kraemer** will serve as Vice President, and **Pam Sieving** and **Tim Breitbarth** will serve as Deacons. They join current Council Members whose terms continue through 2011: **Artie Harris**, Treasurer; **David Blakemore**, Financial Secretary; **Mark Rohrbaugh**, Recording Secretary; and **Mark Sharp**, Deacon. **Matthew Rist**, who just completed a two-year term as Deacon, also graciously agreed to continue on Council to fill out the year remaining on the Deacon term of Sven Kraemer. Thank you all for your willingness and dedication in serving on Council.

A special thanks to the Nominating Committee, **Kendall Bentz**, **Cheryl Beversdorf**, and **Matt Rist**, who worked hard to fill the slate of candidates. And finally, we express our deep gratitude to the individuals whose Council terms are ending: Many thanks to **Mack Ott** for serving as President, **Joanne Noll** as Vice President, and **Zacchaeus Odebo** as Deacon. Thanks be to God!

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE –OUR OUTGOING COUNCIL PRESIDENT

### PARTING WORDS

*by Mack Ott*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This is my valedictory, and I will be brief. First, let me tell you what an honor it has been to serve as Council President for the past two years, and how pleased I am that Marilee Rist will be succeeding me in this role. I know she will find it challenging and rewarding in mixed proportions as I have. Next, let me urge you to expand your vision of stewardship in supporting Christ Lutheran Church. In addition to the financial gifts, what I am referring to here is the service component of being part of Christ. While Martin Luther assured us that no sinner can get into heaven on works alone, he also reminded us that service is our contribution to the life of our faith—both the physical congregation and the communion of saints. Besides presenting sermons or singing in the Choir there are many tasks and roles that go into making our services run smoothly. So, let me remind you of the tasks and roles that all of us need to remember and urge you to consider taking part. Please consider it and, if you do jump in, you'll find that the service is more meaningful as a result of your serving contribution:

**First Assisting Minister**—the leader of the prayers of the people and the pastor's right-hand person in the service; ask Pastor Renata for information if you're interested or ask Kendall Bentz or Beverly King for their experienced view.

**Communion Assistants**—these are the folks who serve the chalice or hold the trays of communion cups and remind us of Christ's presence as we take communion. This simple task can be very rewarding for participants. Call or email Karen in the church office if you are willing to take part in this subtle but key role.

**Altar Care**—the preparation of the altar for the service, including tidying and communion preparation--bread baking, flower arrangements. Ask Marilyn Zukel about these important behind the scenes activities.

**Ushering**—this important task includes passing out bulletins, counting attendance, shepherding the communion lines, and tidying after the service—see Mack Ott or Bob Sylwester if interested or willing.

**Counting**—each week, after service, the offering(s) need to be counted, credited to the appropriate accounts, and deposited in the bank; see David Blakemore, CLC's Financial Secretary.

**Coffee hour Hospitality**—each week a couple prepares coffee and provides light refreshments to lubricate after service talk and sharing. Let Karen in the church office know if you're willing to pitch in; she'll pair you up with some experienced hands.

**Lectors**—these are the readers who present the Old Testament and Epistles readings in the service. Let Karen know if you're willing to take this up.

**Children's Message and Children's Time**—The first is the interpretation of the Gospel reading for the young people; the second is the monitoring the children's activities during the service following Children's time. See Linda Ott, Fred Mills or Rhea Ballard for information.

For any of these needed services, call Karen Christian in the CLC office (202-829-6727 or email at [clcoffice@verizon.net](mailto:clcoffice@verizon.net). As my final service to you as Council President, let me assure you that serving will provide you with more joy and satisfaction than the small effort it takes to jump in and be a part of Christ. Thank you.

## FROM OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS



### **PARTNER ARMS 2, APT. 105**

*By Joanne Noll*

Transitional Housing Apartment 105 in Partner Arms 2 was furnished on Saturday, November 13. Furniture and household items had been gathered from the Yard Sale inventory. The DC government now requires NEW mattresses, box springs, sheets, pillows, blankets, and bed pads. Most of these items were gifted to us. The largest gift was a single set, and a double set of mattresses and box springs-- a wonderful gift indeed!

Helping were Bob & Sara Sylwester, Marilyn Zukel, Mark White, Joanne Noll, and Lori Beaston from CLC. Andrew Adams, THC Volunteer Coordinator, and another volunteer were also part of the team. The THC and Sylwester's vans transported furniture and household items. Once everything was in the apartment workers got "right to it" setting up the bedrooms, living room and kitchen. It took about two hours to set up the new home for a young father and his 6 year-old son. This family which had been living at DC General, the largest shelter in the city, moved into their new home the week of November 15.

A blessed Christmas to this young family in its new home!

## CHRISTMAS WITH ST. DYSMAS FAMILIES

The Community of St. Dysmas is an ELCA congregation within the Maryland Prison system. For a long time Joe Weber, a member of St. John's Lutheran, Riverdale, has been liaison between inmates and families waiting for their loved ones to be released. For several years members and friends of CLC have been providing gift cards from grocery and department stores so these families will have Christmas gifts, etc. The wonderful and generous folks from CLC have provided \$700 in gift cards for Joe to distribute. A blessed Christmas indeed!

### FOR WHOM DO WE PRAY?

*by Pam Sieving*

For several years, our congregational Sunday morning prayers have included **Theresa Brooks**, listed as a “friend of **Pam Sieving**”. Perhaps you’ve wondered who this is. Theresa is the 6 year old daughter of friends; her dad is also an ophthalmologist at the National Eye Institute. Paul and I have known her father since he was a first year ophthalmology resident back at the University of Michigan.

Four years ago, Theresa was diagnosed with a rare tumor. She is doing well, thanks to superb medical care in Boston and DC, support of family and friends, and your prayers.

Last year, the Make-A-Wish Foundation granted Theresa’s wish to be a ballerina with a day at the Washington Ballet’s performance of the Nutcracker. There was a follow-up this year. Some of the excitement is captured in the news article (link below).

[Theresa in Kensington](http://kensington.patch.com/articles/kensington-make-a-wish-girl-lights-town-christmas-tree#c) (<http://kensington.patch.com/articles/kensington-make-a-wish-girl-lights-town-christmas-tree#c>)

You can also learn a bit more about Theresa and her cancer, rhabdomyosarcoma, on a CNN special at 4 p.m. on Christmas Day, “Giving in Focus.”

## THE EAR OF CHRIST

From **Sandy Smith**: I’ve been a lot of traveling this fall, so am staying in place for the holidays. In April and May I was in DC for cataract surgeries on both eyes. The eye surgeries went great, and now I can see 20/20 without glasses. Then, in June, I went to Oberammergau, Germany, and saw the once-every-ten-years Passion Play. In September I went to a conference in Bangkok, Thailand, and took a side trip to Cambodia to see the ruins of Angkor Wat. In October I took R&R to China staying with Kathy and Mike Gelner in Beijing, and going down to Shanghai to see the World Expo. Then in November I returned to Germany for a conference in Frankfurt, an overnight trip to medieval wall city of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, and then a few days to visit friends in The Netherlands.

I’ve received my next assignment, which will be back in Washington, DC, as an assessor on the Board of Examiners, reviewing applicants to the Foreign Service and helping select the next generation of diplomats. I plan to depart Jordan in August 2011.

Greetings from **Jana Shepperd** in snowy Bratislava! I'd like to only shout out to all the friends at CLC "Merry and blessed Christmas to you all!". We won't be coming this year as I'm pregnant and due in late February. We will celebrate Christmas with James's mom (who's coming over) and my family here. We miss you! Hope to see you all possibly in summer, Jana, James & Dalma



Greetings from **Ope, Estelle and Ethanael** Here is a picture of the family with **Feyi and Mubo** when they visited with Ope and family last year in France and Spain.

**Liz and Frank Malone** welcomed a new twig on the family tree, **Chloe Higgins**, daughter of **Ellen and Tyler Higgins**, born November 29, 2010. Mother and child are doing well. Tyler and Ellen are learning new sleep patterns and Liz and Frank are looking forward to their new roles as grandparents.

**Janet Kelly** shares her joy in the birth of twin grand-boys on Thanksgiving Day—a month early! Parents **Brian and Amy Kelly** and boys **Austin and Casey** are healthy and elated as are grandparents **Dean and Janet**.

**Marty Jewett** joined **Caroline, Kahlil, Woody and Takashi** in Flagstaff to see **Andrew** graduate from Northern Arizona University, certified as a construction manager-Yeehaw! Andrew will be traveling a bit then returning to DC to start the job search! CLC is proud of you, too, **Andrew!**

Check out this new website for Lutherans! Visit [LivingLutheran.com](http://LivingLutheran.com), your place for fresh, daily content and conversation on what it means to “live Lutheran.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

**December 25, 2010 Christmas Day (Saturday) 10:30 a.m.**  
**Holy Communion/ Nativity of Our Lord**

**December 26, 2010 Sunday 10:30 a.m.**  
**Service of Holy Communion with Lessons and Carols/Christmas 1**

**January 1, 2011 Saturday 10:30 a.m.**  
**New Year’s Day Agape Feast**

**January 2, 2011 Sunday 10:30 a.m.**  
**Holy Communion**

**January 9, 2011 @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**Service with Holy Communion and Epiphany Pageant Our Young People tell the Story**

**January 16, 2011 @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**Service with Holy Communion followed by Congregational meeting**



From the Epiphany Pageant last year January 2010