



THE
Messenger

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Washington, DC

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

by Pastor Renata Eustis

"How was your silent retreat?" a CLC friend asked. Wholeheartedly I responded, "Good—really good!" Then came, "Now when you describe a silent retreat as being 'good', I'm imagining that means it was relaxing and you feel refreshed, is that right?"

Yes, all of the above and much more. The place was stunningly beautiful--literally right on the Potomac River at what must be one of its widest points in southern Maryland. The weather was sunny and unseasonably warm. I hiked in the woods, sat in the sun for hours looking out at the river and saw a sky-full of stars.

We were a small group--seven, including the leader—and, with the exception of the staff, we had the whole place to ourselves. I found the format the perfect blend of structure and freedom. Over the two days we had four, 45-minute sessions which guided my personal reflection. Each evening we ended with Eucharist, the final night, with a healing service. We spoke during the sessions and worship, but the rest of the time was spent in silence. In our introductions we were asked to share our hopes for the retreat. Several of us, including me, were looking for direction about some specific things. Our leader gently cautioned us to set aside our agendas and just listen.

The theme was "Softly, Tenderly, Jesus is Calling." Throughout the retreat we were reflecting on our lives and where we have seen God's action, as well as where God might be leading us. I did a lot of journal-writing—something that really helps me reflect—and I found some clarity and peace.

But I think what really fed my spirit was the silence. At this point in my life—like many people--I have very little silence in my life. It took a while to quiet all the chatter in my mind. Our leader suggested that we listen to the sounds around us—the gentle waves, the breeze through the trees, the birds, the dried leaves crunching under our feet. I loved that part, and it came easily to me.

But then she asked us to listen for the sound of our own heartbeat. I was relieved that she said it might take us awhile to hear it because, at first, I couldn't hear a thing. After trying intently for a time, I just decided that, for whatever reason, I wasn't going to hear it and stopped thinking about it. Midway through the second day, I was startled by a loud, pounding sound in my ear. It took me a few seconds to realize it was the sound of my heart. I had such a clear awareness of the magnificence of being alive—a moment to go back to like a touchstone when life is not seeming so magnificent.

Being able to go away for a two-day silent retreat is a luxury that would be difficult for many people. But there are other ways to find the kind of silence and time for reflection

that can bring healing and growth. We have to be intentional about it because there is virtually nothing in the culture around us that leads us in this direction. It helps to be in silence with others—as counter-intuitive as that sounds.

Lent is a natural time for building more silence, reflection and prayer into our daily routines—and it's just around the corner! I hope that you, too, will experience the refreshment and renewal that can come through silence.



LENTEN STUDY

Traditionally, Lent was the time for intensive preparation of those who would be baptized at Easter. Prayer and the study of Scripture were the core elements. These 40 days offer each of us a time to grow in our life of faith—in our relationship with God and with each other.

We will offer a Lenten Study on **Wednesdays** during our regular Bible study time, **10:30a.m.** and on **Thursdays, 6:30-7:20 p.m.** (finishing in time for choir). Soup will be offered so that our bodies, as well as our spirits can be fed. We will study Romans 12, using a study called ***The Marks of a Christian***. We'll be in Wenchel Chapel, around a table, and have soup as we discuss, reflect and pray together.

The Thursday evening study will last for three weeks, February 25, March 4, and March 11. The Wednesday morning study will begin on February 25 and finish on March 24. You are invited to come whenever you can.

The Marks of a Christian is a 40-day Lenten devotional booklet (similar to last year's book focused on the Lord's Prayer). Copies will be available on Ash Wednesday for those who would like them. Even if you are unable to come to the Lenten study sessions, you will be able to study and reflect on the same Scriptures.

WARM AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

By Joel Richter

I can't believe that it is almost half over. Have I really been here five months? It feels like I just started yesterday, yet it has been so rewarding for me with everyone helping me learn.

Most of this growth comes from a simple truth from our sign on 16th Street; it says, "Worship with a Warm and Welcoming Community." The sign doesn't lie. We are gathered as a community in the Spirit of God. This is the center of our lives in community. It is so wonderful seeing Jesus Christ at work in the various members of the congregation whether it be in education roles, singing in the church choir, or caring for various members of our congregation.

When reading 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, we are able to understand that our various talents and gifts work together in the Holy Spirit in differing ways, yet all in the same purpose of love. I am reminded, "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing--but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." As I work more with different members of this congregation, this compassionate love and service reveals itself to me. It might be in critical feedback on preaching, teaching adult forum, participating in the yard sale, or getting to know each member better. Through these relationships, I have experienced such a kindness in the body of Christ, which we are.

In closing, this love won't end. Let's enjoy and bask in this love and service that we

have for each other. Let us ponder about the loving service that we have for each other. With five months gone, I look forward to 7 more months in this loving community and to experience more of this love and compassion.

**ALL ARE WELCOME
IN THIS PLACE**

ENLIVENING WORSHIP
Notes from the gathering of January 9th

Over the past several months, *Enlivening Worship*, a group of CLC parishioners led by Pastor Renata, has been exploring the structure and content of our Sunday morning worship service. This began as an effort to consider how we can strengthen our worship together – to deepen its meaningfulness and make it more engaging for all. We are also responding to suggestions regarding worship content and length given in the congregational survey of worship effectiveness implemented last fall by Communications Chairperson, Alice Meyer. We believe that those responses offer us an opportunity to expand our understanding of our liturgy and to enliven our worship content. An important step in this was taken at our January meeting where:

- **Valentine Breitbarth** reviewed the structure and historic rationale of the “Collect,” the opening prayer;
- **Karin Klingman** explained the lectionary and the relation between the readings;
- **Kendall Bentz** reported on the processional, including how and why the Gospel is presented as it is;
- **Pastor Renata** set out the function and role of the sermon or homily;
- **Dan Seligman** reviewed the history, focus and intent of the Nicene Creed.

- **Rhea Ballard-Thrower** will discuss the Young People's Message at the next meeting.

A spirited and spiritual discussion of these elements was joined by **Vicar Joel**, Music Director **Gerry Coleman**, **Mack** and **Linda Ott**. The result was a deeper understanding and appreciation of the role of the liturgy and its elements in our worship. We anticipate a further exploration of these issues at the *Enlivening's* next gathering on February 6, 4-6 pm in the Chapel. Our plan is to share what we have learned more widely—in Adult Forum, the bulletin, the website, and, of course, in our worship services. Join us and help make Christ's worship structure stronger, livelier, and more meaningful.



"EMERALD CITY"
PANCAKE SUPPER, FEBRUARY 16
Shrove Tuesday
by Joanne Noll

Let's go green! Join us **Tuesday, February 16, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm** in the EMERALD CITY (undercroft) for the traditional Shrove Tuesday PANCAKE SUPPER. Pancakes made from scratch, sausage, home-made applesauce, beverages and dessert will be served. All you can eat for a free-will offering! Bring friends and family! It's fun to eat pancakes for dinner--almost like dessert first!

Help is needed with decorating, serving and clean-up. Loan us your green stuff, crystal ball, mirror dance hall ball, and anything else you might have to decorate our Emerald City. Contact Joanne Noll, 301-530-2265, or nollcaljo@juno.com, and see you for dinner on February 16!



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 17**. We offer the following services:

7:30 – 8:00 a.m., Contemplative Prayer & Imposition of Ashes (**Wenchel Chapel**)

12 noon, Service of Holy Communion with Confession & Imposition of Ashes (**Wenchel Chapel**)

7:00 p.m., Service of Holy Communion with Confession & Imposition of Ashes (**Sanctuary**)

PRESIDENT'S NOTE IN GRATITUDE FOR FAITHFUL WORK

By Mack Ott

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James 2:26

As we know, our brother Martin Luther, nearly five centuries ago, inveighed against James's admonition. Yet even Paul, the expounder of the sufficiency of grace doctrine, noted that works are simply the embodiment of faith, the blossoming of the inner blessing through which we share it. Those greatly blessed share greatly their inner light with us, strengthening and shoring up the faith of the rest of us, encouraging us to follow their good example. In this note, I would like to recognize some of our brothers and sisters whose efforts—continual, skilled, often unacknowledged, but vital to the functions of Christ—carry much of the work that makes our worship and our physical facilities bloom. I do not intend to embarrass them by calling attention to their quietly ennobling efforts; rather I intend simply to express, on

behalf of the rest of us, our gratitude for their enthusiastic embodiment of our baptismal command:

Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Bob Sylwester, Chairman of the House Committee. Bob is the *eminence grise* of the physical plant at Christ Lutheran Church, frequent usher, dependable counter. Whether it is deciphering the controls of our new HVAC system, attending to the plantings outside (with Scott Pitner) or simply assuring that the heat is on and the ramps are in place for the ushering of those who need physical assistance, Bob is the man. Before his current roles, Bob was for well over a decade the financial nuts and bolts man at CLC. A measure of his efforts is that since he gave up this solo role, it has been filled by two positions—Council Treasurer and Bookkeeper. Thank you, Bob.

David Blakemore, Financial Secretary. David is the new (2010-11) financial secretary. The intoner of the Kyrie, drum enthusiast, choir tenor, and counter. He is a past Council President who more recently initiated the bookkeeper position (2007-09) and created financial books that are transferable and understandable (QuickBooks) which he has passed onto Penny Noll, now the CLC bookkeeper. Speaking as a former Council Treasurer, I can attest personally to the benefits of his efforts to make our books sound, timely, and transparent, an effort that was vastly increased by the complexities and payment flows of the renovation. Thank you, David.

Joanne Noll, Council Vice President. What can be said about Mrs. Noll that has not already been offered—preserver of records, formerly the heart of the Sunday School program, past Council President, the genie of the annual pancake supper, doyenne of the yard sale since 1989 (along with “arranging” the incredible record of dry weather on the 4th Saturday in September for as long as I have been a member), visitor to the hospitalized, and current Council VP? Joanne is the premier organizer, bringing

order out of chaos, quietly reminding us what needs to be done, how, when, and by whom, always in accord with the rules and traditions of Christ. Thank you, Joanne.

Phil Hecht, Chairman of the Visioning Committee. Another former Council President, Phil is a long-time member of CLC's choir. He was a driving force behind the institution of Transition Housing Corporation, serving on its board and assuring its expansion and success. Phil was a key member and organizer of the Visioning Committee, the fountainhead of the renovation plan and a key part of the group that brought it into reality. Once the design process was underway, Phil became the lead negotiator in arranging the financing, and it is fitting indeed that, through the generous bequests of Arnold Hespe and Dorothy Armstrong, his latest efforts have succeeded in reducing the monthly servicing cost of CLC's mortgage with MIF by half. Thank you, Phil.

Linda Ott, Messenger Editor and Sunday school teacher. Council President (2001-02), Linda is the manager of CLC's website, charter member of the Visioning Committee, Stephen minister, frequent Crucifer, often the FAM, children's message provider, diligent Sunday School teacher, Summer Bible School coordinator-director, Epiphany pageant organizer, flower arranger, soup provider, and counter. Linda is the go-to person when something needs to be done, to be fixed, to be prayed over, the sick to be comforted, meals to be made and delivered, the undone to be done. She doesn't sing in the choir, but she regularly sings in row 3, lector side, when not in the Chancel. Thank you, Linda.

Howard Bell, Stewardship Committee Chairman. Council President (2003-04), Howard is the canny pursuer of balance and value in the financial issues involved in the renovation. He is a sometime usher, a tenor in duets with his lovely wife Sheila, and the leader of the effort to shake the rest of our renovation out of the trees where it sometimes seems to have been lodged, perhaps inadvertently, by the craftsmen and the documenters who have hidden it. Howard is the organizer who with a swish of his Blackberry can organize and create a

meeting, the draftsman to ensure that the agenda will be productive and enabling, and the ideal chairman to deliver the subtle signals of disapproval and demands for better performance, politely but pointedly. Thank you, Howard.

These are but six of our brothers and sisters at Christ Lutheran Church who richly deserve our thanks and recognition, an admittedly short and incomplete list. I invite you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit your thank-you or in-gratitude notes for other quiet sustainers of the faith. You may do so for attribution by sending your notes to me as an email or leaving a note in my mail box adjacent to the church office for inclusion in future *Messengers*. If you prefer anonymity simply specify that, and I will speak for you. We, the served, would like to thank those who serve us.

ELCA UPDATE FROM HAITI

By The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Photo credit: Paul Jeffrey/ACT-International

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

—1 Corinthians 12:26

Almost two weeks have passed since the devastating earthquake in Haiti. The outpouring of gifts from members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to ELCA Disaster Response has

enabled a swift response on behalf of this church.

Thank you for your generous financial support which now totals more than \$1.6 million. Thousands of other gifts are still being counted. Our community-based partners are already providing:

- Two water purification systems to bring clean water to 25,000 people.
- Emergency food and medical supplies to thousands.
- Blankets and tents to shelter 10,000 people who are homeless.
- Funding, distributed through three partners, will increase as giving continues.
- \$300,000 has been sent to The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a key responder and member of Action by Churches Together (ACT). The funds support LWF efforts to provide shelter to people left homeless by the quake.
- \$150,000 has been sent to Lutheran World Relief (LWR), Baltimore, for material aid.
- \$150,000 has been sent to Church World Service (CWS) for construction of temporary water systems and distribution of water purification materials.

In addition, \$25,000 has been sent to Lutheran Services of Florida for initial support to refugees and Haitian Americans entering or returning to the United States.

We are pleased that Louis Dorvillier, director for International Development and Disaster Response in the ELCA Global Mission program unit, is part of a delegation to his country of origin with LWF and ACT. Your generosity makes this life-saving work possible. As we celebrate this outpouring of gifts and prayers, we also know that we have a long road to travel together. There is so much more to be done. This church is committed to walking with our brothers and sisters in Haiti for years to come; your

continued support is needed to provide ongoing care.

I encourage you to visit the ELCA Disaster Response (www.elca.org/disaster) Web site for updated information, worship resources, bulletin inserts and details on how to offer financial support. General mission-support dollars and gifts to ELCA Vision for Mission make it possible for 100 percent of your gifts designated for Haiti Earthquake Relief to be used entirely for this response effort.

To give today, go online (www.elca.org/haitiearthquake) or call 800-638-3522.

P.S. View more photos of your gifts at work (www.elca.org/bishopstatement).



Mission Statement

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a faith-based membership organization called to improve the quality of life of its members, their families and their communities by providing unparalleled solutions that focus on financial security, wellness and caring for others.

THRIVENT BUILDS

By Marty Jewett

Our church falls in the area of the National Capitol Chapter of Thrivent for Lutherans. Both Kendall Bentz and I, Marty Jewett, are on the 2010 Thrivent Board. Being an Episcopalian for a good part of my life I didn't realize what a treasure Thrivent for Lutherans is--a non-profit that uses the funds raised by helping members make money, protect their assets, etc, to give back to the churches and community services they serve. So, for example, Thrivent is the largest corporate supporter of Habitat for Humanity--helping build 314 houses in the United States last year--including the house in DC that CLC supported with sweat equity and funds. Globally, Thrivent is responsible for the construction of thousands of homes including the ones Sharon Kelly and I worked on in El Salvador.

In 2009 Thrivent supported our yard sale with matching funds of \$4,920 and another \$1,000 for our silent auction.

If you would like to know more about this organization or how it can help you ask Kendall or me or Thrivent representative like Greg Roemer or their website www.thriventbuilds.com

TO TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT

By Karen Christian



On December 22, 2009, I watched as former Vicar Christine, was elevated to The Rev. Christine Stephan right before my eyes. This was my first ordination, and I found it to be a moving experience. Pr. Phil Hirsch gave, what was to me, a moving and memorable sermon. I sat in the pew and listened to him tell Christine to remember she was the connection between her congregation and the Lord. She would be a kind of link joining man with God. The way she reached out to touch and hold on to the hem of Jesus' garment, others will reach out to hold on to her garment in the same way. I sat and thought what a great responsibility that must be for any pastor. I felt a happiness and pride seeing Pastors Renata Eustis and Lee Schray standing with her, giving her support and prayer along with Pastors from around our synod. I know that Pr. Christine was destined to bring the word and do the work of God. I know that everyone who attended the service at Bethlehem Lutheran was happy to see God's lamb become the shepherd. Epiphany Lutheran has received a wonderful gift from God in Pr. Christine, not to mention the best chocolate chip cookie maker around. Blessings to all pastors and thanks be to God for allowing us to touch the hem of His garment.

CHILDREN'S BAKE SALE FOR HAITI

By Tiffany Gidney

The unimaginable crisis in Haiti has captured everyone's attention, and even if we try to shield our children from the news they have inevitably seen some very graphic images and heard shocking and unsettling stories. Many of the young people here at home are searching for ways to help Haiti. Sunday January 31 we organized a children's bake sale to benefit the ELCA's work in Haiti. The children raised \$48 that be sent to ELCA Disaster Response.

Thank you for your support!

WEDNESDAY MORNING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER AT CLC

by Kendall Bentz

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

Join us each **Wednesday morning at 7:30** am in our beautiful chapel for a period of silent, contemplative prayer. Each week our group gathers to rest in God and to practice centering prayer – a quiet, meditative prayer form intended to help us experience God's presence within us. Prayer time ends by 8:00 am. As the Lenten season begins, often a time of prayerful contemplation, consider coming for an opportunity to deepen your relationship with God. If you have any questions, contact Kendall Bentz (kendall_bentz@hotmail.com).

NATIONAL MASTER CHORALE

by Cheryl Beversdorf

Cheryl Beversdorf is pleased to report the establishment of a new professional chorus in Washington, DC—the National Master Chorale (NMC). Cheryl is a member of the Board of Directors and a singer in this group. The inaugural concert, *Winter Into Spring*, will be held **Sunday, February 28, 2010 at 7 pm** at the National Presbyterian Church and feature the music of Guest Lecturer and Composer Morten Lauridsen. The 20th-century program will also explore themes of Winter, Spring, transition, and transformation through choral works of Poulenc, Hindemith, Copeland, and others.

More information can be found on the NMC website at www.nationalmasterchorale.org.



THEOLOGICAL BOOK CLUB

Join in a lively discussion of *What Paul Meant* by Garry Wills, **Sunday, March 14** during **Adult Forum (9:15-10:15a.m.)** in the Library. This book was a best seller and got rave reviews like this one from *The Los Angeles Times*: “If you think you knew Paul, get ready to have all sorts of cherished preconceptions exhilaratingly stripped away. If you’ve ever been vaguely curious, there is no finer introduction.” Phil Hecht will lead our discussion.

BOOK REVIEW FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

By Pastor Renata

As a parent, I’ve found that one of the easiest ways to nurture the Christian faith of our children is by reading books to them. There are lots of inspiring books written for young children—and some of them are even in our library. I invite anyone who would like to recommend a favorite book to write a mini-review for *The Messenger*.

One of my personal favorites is a book Clare received for her baptism, *In God’s Name*, written by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and exquisitely illustrated by Phoebe Stone. It is a simple yet profound story of people searching for God’s name. Each one calls God something that connects with their experiences and hopes—the farmer calls God “Source of Life”, the tired soldier calls God “Maker of Peace”, the woman who cares for the sick calls God “Healer”, the slave who was freed calls God “Redeemer”. These people and many others with different names for God argue about whose name is the “best and only name for God”. Finally, they all come together and call God “One”.

What I like most about this book is that it takes us beyond “Is God a man or a woman?” to the rich variety of images for God that are found in the Bible. In addition to helping us envision God more widely within our own faith, this story builds a foundation for a healthy respect of other religions and faiths. We are now on our third run of reading this book over and over again (now available as a board book)—and I can honestly say I’ve never gotten tired of it. You can find a copy of the book in the Atrium.



THE EAR OF CHRIST

There are moments during worship when a child gets caught in the moment and is taken by the music, the spectacle, the peace of being in a sanctuary that is beyond words. One such moment I’ve witnessed is little Sarah as she holds Pastor Renata’s hand at the end of worship and before “Go in Peace; serve the Lord.” Another is captured in the photo below as Gerry plays the postlude and young children are drawn to the beauty and spirit of that moment.



Sam Sharp and Robbie Seligman with mom Jen observe a master at work.

Amelia Kay, daughter of Christopher and Carly Gaddie, is baptized on Sunday, January 24



EDITOR'S NOTE: With each edition, I hope that you are brought closer to our church community by learning more about us collectively and as individual members. I hope that you are enriched by sharing your news and hearing the news of others in the community and in the church at large.

Pastors will tell you that one of the challenges a pastor faces is honest feedback about their messages. As the editor of the *Messenger*, I welcome feedback in the form of articles, news fit to print, pictures, and ideas for articles or columns, and I love to hear from you. You can send these to CLCMessenger@gmail.com. –Linda

Parting Thought...

I am who I am because of who we all are.
–Mahatma Gandhi

From Desmond Tutu's preface to the book of sayings "PEACE" commemorating Mahatma Gandhi

Ubuntu addresses a central tenet of African philosophy: the essence of what it is to be human. The definition of this concept has two parts. The first is that the person is friendly, hospitable, generous, gentle, caring and compassionate. In other words, someone who will use their strengths on behalf of others – the weak and the poor and the ill – and not take advantage of anyone. This person treats others as he or she would be treated. And because of this they express the second part of the concept, which concerns openness, large-heartedness. They share their worth. In doing so my humanity is recognized and becomes inextricably bound to theirs.

People with *ubuntu* are approachable and welcoming; their attitude is kindly and well-disposed; they are not threatened by the goodness in others because their own esteem and self-worth is generated by knowing they belong to a greater whole. To recast the Cartesian proposition "I think; therefore I am," *ubuntu* would phrase it, "I am human because I belong." Put another way, "a person is a person through other people," a concept perfectly captured by the phrase "me we." No one comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think or walk or speak or behave unless we learned it from our fellow human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human.

Mahatma Gandhi's *ubuntu* showed that the only way we can ever be human is together. The only way we can be free is together.

End of 2009 TREASURER'S REPORT

By Artie Harris

	<u>Operating Profit/Loss Through December (50% thru FY '10)</u>			
	<u>December</u>	<u>July-Dec</u>	<u>FY Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Income w/o AIC & YS	\$35,357	\$126,908	\$248,800	51%
AIC Income	\$21,058	\$87,566	\$106,152	82%
Yard Sale Income	\$0	\$34,507	\$33,000	105%
Total Expenses	<u>(\$35,285)</u>	<u>(\$229,721)</u>	<u>(\$435,417)</u>	53%
Net Income	\$21,130	\$19,260	(\$47,465)	

Notes:

- 1) "Income w/o AIC and YS" consists of envelope & plate offerings & rental income
- 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 six months of this fiscal year (July through December), the church is likely to end the fiscal year (June 30, 2010) with less of a deficit than originally budgeted. Thank you for your financial support.