
OUR CHURCH PAPER

December 2009
Vol. 18 No. 10

A Word from the Pastor at Advent

I could have kicked myself. It was just recently when the annual Leonid meteor shower was to take place. It was scheduled to produce an incredible display at around 4:30 am early on Tuesday morning, November 17. So I fell asleep early, hoping, knowing, that sometime around 4:00 am I would wake up, as men in their fifties usually do, and be able to go outside and watch a little of the heavenly show. I was so excited about the possibility, that I awoke at 2:00 am, and then for fear of falling asleep, lay awake, staring at the ceiling until 3:30. With my reason for my perpetual nocturnal journey still looming, I figured that I would wake up around 4 anyway, even if I dozed off at 3:30. So I did eventually fall asleep, but only to awaken with a start at 5:45am and the sun already lightening the sky. Phooey, now I'll have to wait for next year and who knows if we'll have as clear a night as we had this year.

The Leonid shower, while not as spectacular as the annual Perseid shower, is certainly worth waking up for, but I have another, better reason for my affection for this display.

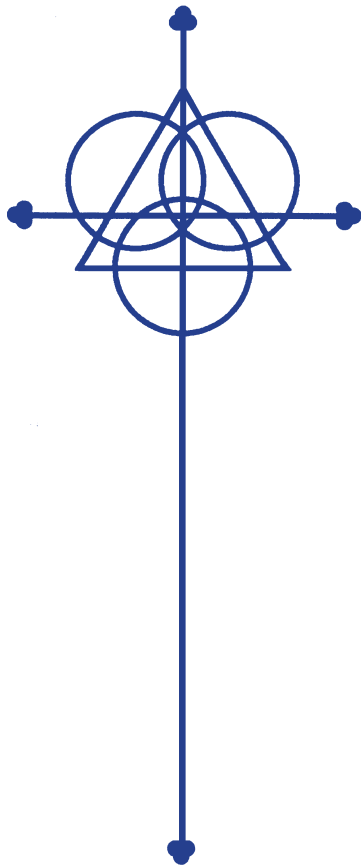
It has been some years ago now, our two girls, Katie and Sarah were still young, in school and at home. Their mother, Debby, was away at a Women of the ELCA event. The Leonid shower was to be that cold, November night and it was forecast to be clear. Outside the window of our third floor, at the back of the house away from the streetlights, we have a little porch that extends out over the second floor, and is accessible through a large casement window. The girls went to bed at their regular time and I set out to create our makeshift astronomy lab. I set out two sleeping bags, zipped together and placed large comfortable pillows up against the side of the house and waited. At 4 am, I went in to wake the girls up, they were obedient but not pleased and hardly "all there." I took them up to the third floor, and led them out onto the balcony. We crawled into the sleeping bag, and waited. You could see your breath that night. Then, all of sudden, a bright streak across the sky, "Did you see it?" I asked. "Yeah.... cool." We scanned the heavens and the Leonids did not disappoint. We must have seen thirty or forty remnants of the Temple-Tuttle Comet crash through the earth's atmosphere that night, just for us. It was magical and one of those moments I'll keep forever.

Someone once said that if you gathered up all these "moments" and came up with a sum total of an hour, you'd be a lucky person. I have "way more" than that hour already, and hopefully, still have some time to go.

Many of these precious moments have come to me and my family at this time of year, Advent and Christmas. Many of you know our affection for St. Nicholas' Day. I look forward to OUR time together in this blessed time and hope that some of YOUR moments, will come to you here at Holy Trinity as we observe this time of anticipation, remembrance and celebration. First, among many, is the recollection of how God came to be among us in the person of Jesus. This Incarnation, this indwelling, this en-fleshing, this Immanuel, this God-with-us, is the miracle around which all of our potential "moments" exist and from which God gives us our capacity for wonder and awe. Come and remember with us, come and celebrate with us, come and give thanks for the blessing of Christmas.

Sincerely yours,

Pastor Bang



Holy
Trinity
Lutheran
Church

Council Corner – December 2009

The Yankee Candle Sale, sponsored by Church Council, was a tremendous success. We raised almost \$1,300 towards LCLC camperships. Kara Kryszczuk was the top seller of all of our confirmands. She sold \$347 worth of merchandise, earning almost \$139 for her own campership. Way to go Kara!

Those of you who did place a Yankee candle order, we appreciate your help. Orders should arrive at the church by December 7th. Tables will be setup on Sunday, December 13th, in Redeemer Hall, for you to pick up your merchandise. You can also make arrangements to pick your order up by calling me at 683-6799 or, by contacting your "seller."

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 9th.

Yours in Christ,

Paul Bauchle

Congregation President



Social Ministries News...

The Social Ministries Committee is once again preparing for the Christmas Season at School 17. As in the past, events are being planned which will necessitate participation of the congregation.

The Angel Tree project will remain expanded in accordance with the past generosity of the people of Holy Trinity. Besides the gifts which every student receives, each classroom teacher at School 17 will designate three (3) needy students to receive special gifts. Members of the congregation may select an ornament from the Angel Tree with the name, age, and suggested need of the student. Gifts should be returned beneath the tree with the original ornament attached by Sunday, December 13th.


We will also continue our "Mitten Tree" service to School 17. The tree will be located on the stair landing for the Sunday School so that you may place mittens, a scarf, a hat, or any other item to help keep a child warm this winter on the tree. They will all be delivered to the children at School 17.

Thank you for your continued support of the Social Ministries Committee.

John Knipler

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE

- 
- 5:00 p.m. Church Family service at Holy Trinity
 - 9:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Communion service at Parkside
 - 9:45 p.m. Preservice music at Holy Trinity
 - 10:30 p.m. Festival candlelight service of Holy Communion at Holy Trinity

CHRISTMAS DAY

- 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion service at Holy Trinity

Advent Program

Each Tuesday in Advent, December 1, 8, 15 and 22 beginning at 7:00 p.m. and concluding at 8:30 p.m., we will gather for dessert, coffee and conversation on the book of faith "Advent Reflections". Please join us each week or any week. If you would like to pick up a copy of the Advent Reflections book in advance of the study, please see either Pastor Bang or Pastor Olsen.

For many of us, entering the season of Advent (whether we know when it begins or not), is like the start of a big race. We run to the shopping mall, we dash from one get-together to another, we zip off to another shopping mall, we scurry around the kitchen making cookies, and we make one last quick stop at the mall. The four weeks of Advent are sometimes the busiest weeks of the year, and in the middle of all this activity, we sometimes struggle to remember what's really at the "finish line" - a baby in a manger, Jesus, the Savior of the world.

The weeks prior to the first Christmas were filled with busy-ness, too. Mary and Joseph and others struggled - as all people do - to make it through each day. Imagine the tasks involved in traveling on foot with your family from one town to another to be counted in a census. This was a camping trip in which the people had to carry all that was needed - food, clothing, and shelter. Bear in mind also that one of the travelers was eight-plus months pregnant.

When we read the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke, however, we hear the quiet, humble beginnings of a story that has affected the world in dramatic ways. Perhaps that's a clue for us - to live the Advent season in a humble, quiet peace, while reflecting on the real reason for the season.

Advent traditions developed long before the season was officially named and became part of the church year. For centuries, Christians have spent the weeks before Christmas preparing their hearts and minds for an important festival. This likely involved personal reflection, confession, and recognition of their need for forgiveness. At the same time, church leaders preached and taught about the importance of celebrating Jesus' birth and anticipating his return.

This Advent Reflections book, by offering reflections and activities for every day in Advent, maintains the tradition of remembering Jesus' birth and looking forward to his return. The benefit of this book comes in part from the daily discipline of taking time out for a conversation with Scripture, with friends or family, and ultimately, with God. This discipline involves a few minutes a day and can be connected to things you already do - meals, walks, morning coffee. Make a decision at the start of the Advent season to set aside time for Advent reflections. That one choice creates a link with the first people of the story and millions since who have joined to celebrate the difference Jesus makes in this world.

In 2007 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) affirmed the centrality of the Bible to Christian life and faith, and at the same time recognized the reality of biblical illiteracy in the church. This resulted in the ELCA's Book of Faith initiative, which invites us to open Scripture and join the conversation. By looking at the Bible through different lenses - historical, literary, Lutheran, and devotional - anyone can enter into a dialogue with God's Word in ways that lead to deeper understanding and spiritual growth.

As a Book of Faith resource, this book offers opportunities to open the Scriptures and join the conversation each day during Advent. The emphasis here is on the devotional lens, but the other lenses are used to provide insights into Scripture as well. The conversation can be shared with others through the questions provided, or it can go deeper in personal reflection. Daily activities offer hands-on experiences of the texts and what they mean for today.

Taking time for reflection during Advent can help us forget some of the busy-ness of the season, appreciate this time of waiting and watching, anticipate the second coming of Jesus, and find joy in God's presence every day.

May your Advent reflections excite you and energize you to celebrate God's love come to earth that first Christmas morning.

Christmas Flowers and Wreaths



Preparations have already begun for Christmas, which is quickly approaching, and as it has been in the past, the congregation is being asked to contribute toward the purchase of poinsettias and wreaths which will be hung in the church and placed in the chancel for Christmas. Both the flowers and the wreaths may be given in memory of and/or in honor of someone for whom we care.

As in past years, your response to this request has been overwhelming, and we thank you for your continuing support and generosity. If you would once again like to give a Christmas offering to help defray the costs of decorating the sanctuary, you may do so by sending in your check (payable to Holy Trinity). Poinsettias are \$9.50, medium-size wreaths are \$55, and small wreaths are \$30. As always, gifts toward the purchase of the Christmas trees in any amount are welcome. Donations will be listed on your giving statement.

I/We would like to place _____ poinsettia(s) in the chancel on Christmas Eve (\$9.50 per plant).

I/We would like to contribute toward the Christmas wreaths \$_____ and/or trees \$_____

In memory of

In honor of

By

Our Church Paper

English Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity
A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Upstate New York Synod

1080 Main Street (bet. Summer and North)
Buffalo, New York 14209-2389
716-886-2400 • 716-884-7505 (fax)
716-886-0543 Concert Line
E-mail: HTLCOFELCA@aol.com
www.holytrinitybuffalo.org

The Rev. Dr. Charles D. Bang, Senior Pastor
The Rev. John Buerk, Pastor
The Rev. Eric O. Olsen, Pastor
Charles Rojek, Pastoral Assistant
James Bigham, Organist-Choirmaster
Linda Lipczynski, Parish Secretary
Carol Littlefield, Parish Accountant
Pat Mohr, Parish Nurse
Jeremiah Smith, Youth Ministry
John Busch, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Patrick Ryan, Steward of Buildings and Grounds
Phillip Schlueter, Curator of the Organs
Justin Pomietlarz, Youth Choir Director

Desktop Publishing by Gallagher Printing, Inc.



Decorating the Church

Everyone is invited to join the Men's Group on Wednesday, December 16 at 4:00 p.m. to decorate the Christmas trees in the main church and chapel. Dinner will be provided for those who help decorate.

The Men's Group will continue to collect food, money and gift cards for the needy until December 16; that night we will also be sorting the food donations for our food baskets so we can deliver to needy families. Any questions, please call Chuck Rojek in the church office.



Temple Talk by Barb Wozniak

Last year I spoke about change. As most of us know, change is slow, however, some significant changes have been made in the way business is being done at Holy Trinity...committees were requested to thoroughly examine budgets to reduce spending, investment strategies are being challenged and a personnel committee has been formed and in the process of interviewing all employees, to mention a few.

This year's message is about simplifying...the ELCA has developed a new stewardship program for our use called "Make it Simple." Back in November, letters were sent to the congregation introducing the program. You will be seeing more information about activities after the first of the year in the bulletin and church paper.

Included in that letter were several pieces of information about giving. On Sunday November 22 as part of the worship service, you had the opportunity to present the commitment and covenant cards as part of your offering. To those of you who have already submitted your cards, "Thank You!" In making your decision in filling out the cards, I ask you to consider some opportunities for service.

As you may be aware, I have the pleasure of coordinating our prayer shawl ministry. I realized a while ago that my gifts are NOT in the knitting of the shawls, but in keeping the group together, so to speak. I recently was able to participate with others from the group, in one of the "worship to go" events at the Tonawanda Manor Nursing Home. Before the service began, we invited the residents in attendance to choose their own shawl. They were awed by the fact that they were receiving such an amazing gift at no charge...in fact several wanted to pay us for them! What a joy it was to see the residents peruse the colors, sizes and textures of the shawls as they made their decision. Many of them immediately wrapped themselves in the shawls and wore them during worship...thank you to all those who helped to make this presentation possible.

I was asked to participate in the worship service by reading the prayers of the day. These children of God were hungry for all of what we shared with them that day. I would like to lift up the participants of this ministry who have been sharing God's love for months and encourage you to share a couple of hours one Sunday a month. It would mean the world to the residents to see your smiling face!

Earlier that same day I had participated in "Godly Play"...our new Sunday school curriculum. Hearing the children come upstairs after the sermon was truly a "joyful noise!" I have to admit I was a bit apprehensive after I volunteered since I hadn't worked with our youngest members in years! Perhaps the most meaningful portion of my participation was when the children talked about what the story meant to them...what was the most important part to them...how wise our children are! You too, can experience this joy as a volunteer in our Sunday school program in a variety of ways that require small amounts of time commitment.

In Pastor Olsen's October 11 sermon, he mentions "raising our gaze above the shoeline"...not making eye contact...referencing situations where we try to evade the telephone call or conversation when we are asked by another to serve the congregation. Our commitment to this congregation must be the opposite...in place of averting our gaze, we must step forward, eagerly, before being asked and boldly volunteer our service!

Perhaps you'd like to gather a group for Bible or book study, participate in the prayer chain, serve on a committee or council (by the way the nominating committee is in the process of calling and would certainly welcome your call or conversation!). Have a conversation with the pastors, council members, committee members or church office staff. There is much work for us to do as disciples of Christ, not only in this congregation, but outside of it.

In our offering prayer we say "May our offerings, given in your name, lift up those who are bowed." How will you use what you have been given by God to fulfill that statement? I encourage you to respond out of the abundance that is ours in Christ.

Medicare Choices

Well it is that time of the year once again, November 15 - December 31, 2009, when we, those of us on Medicare, can join or switch our health insurance plans. The plan you choose affects many things like the cost, benefits, doctor choice, convenience and quality of your health care plan. Medicare is working with private companies approved by Medicare that provide different ways to get your health care and prescription drug coverage in the Medicare Program.

Your Medicare plan choices include:

The original Medicare Plan - This plan provides your Part A and/or Part B coverage. Part A covers inpatient care in hospitals and helps cover skilled nursing facility, hospice and home health care. Part B covers doctor's services, outpatient care, home health care and helps cover some preventive services to help maintain your health and to keep certain illnesses from getting worse. You don't usually pay a monthly premium for Part A coverage if you or your spouse paid Medicare taxes while working. The Part B premium is taken out of your Social Security check each month (\$96.40). This Medicare plan pays for many health care services and supplies but it doesn't pay for all of them. There are costs that you must pay, like coinsurance, copayments and deductibles. These costs are called "gaps". You need to shop for a Medigap policy as costs vary and may go up as you get older. A Medigap policy covers only one person. You also need prescription drug coverage (Part D). To join a Medicare drug plan, you must have Medicare Part A and B. If you decide not to join a Medicare drug plan and don't have another creditable plan, like Epic, you will pay a late enrollment penalty if you join later. If your income is limited, there is help available for Medicare Part B and Medicare drug coverage.

Medicare Advantage Plans - These are plans under the umbrella of Medicare. These plans cover more services and have lower out of pocket costs than the original Medicare plan. Some plans cover prescription drugs. In some plans you need to go to certain doctors or certain hospitals to obtain coverage. If you join this plan, Medicare pays a fixed amount for your care every month to the companies offering these plans. These plans must follow rules set by Medicare. However, each plan can charge different out of pocket costs and have different rules for how you get services. Medicare Advantage Plans include: Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) like Independent Health, BC/BS, and Univera; Preferred Provider Organization (PPO); Medical Savings Account (MSA); and Special Needs Plans (SNP).

Make sure you understand how the plan works before you join. Many of us received the Medicare and You 2010 book. Please read it. It explains all and more of what I have tried to explain. You can call Medicare 1-800-633-4227 with any questions or go to www.medicare.gov. Once you decide on a plan, call the plan and request 3 books from them. 1. BENEFITS BOOK 2. FORMULARY (which lists the prescription drugs and the coverage) 3. PROVIDER LIST. I have the books for Independent Health, Univera, and BC/BS.

If I can be of any assistance with all this information, please call me 684-9165 and I will be glad to visit you in your home and assist you.

Have a Blessed Holiday

Pat

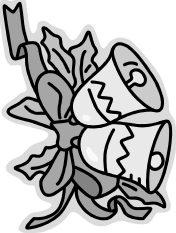
Your Parish Nurse



Thrivent Financial

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will be ending the GivingPlus Program on or before the end of 2009 and the new program, Thrivent Choice, will be launched sometime in the spring of 2010. Thrivent Financial will contribute \$1 for every \$2 that a member donates through the program, up to a maximum supplement of \$300 each year. If you are a member of Thrivent Financial and would like to have your contribution directed to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, please call the church office at 886-2400 or log on to our website www.holytrinitybuffalo.org to receive the GivingPlus Gift Form. Increase the impact of your donation by taking advantage of the Program today.

DECEMBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 2 nd Sunday in Advent 8:30 Service of Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Ed 10:30 Service of Holy Communion w/First Communion 10:30 Sunday School / Nursery 11:45 Coffee Hour 11:45 Confirmation Meeting w/lunch 11:45 Chancel Choir	7 9:30 Bible Study	1 4:30 BNYC 5:00 Lectio Divina 6:30 Healing Together 7:00 Advent Program w/dessert and coffee 7:30 Yoga <i>Happy Birthday Patrick Ryan</i>	2 9:30 VCJC Meeting 10:00 Staff Meeting 12:00 Trinity Lunch 5:30 WELCA/Needlers 6:00 BNYC 6:00 Investment Meeting 7:00 Committee Meetings	3 6:00 Youth Choir 6:00 Chapel Choir 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 AA/AL-ANON	4 5:00 Youth choir Mom's cookie bake 6:00 Wedding rehearsal <i>Happy Birthday Chuck Rojek</i>	5 4:30 Zirpola/McFarland Wedding
6 8:30 Service of Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Ed 10:30 Service of Holy Communion w/First Communion 10:30 Sunday School / Nursery 11:45 Coffee Hour 11:45 Confirmation Meeting w/lunch 11:45 Chancel Choir	7 9:30 Bible Study	8 4:30 BNYC 5:00 Lectio Divina 5:30 Dortmund Christmas Party 7:00 Advent Program w/dessert and coffee 7:30 Yoga	9 10:00 Staff Meeting 12:00 Trinity Lunch 6:00 BNYC 6:00 Council 6:00 Finance	10 10:00 Christian Action 6:00 Youth Choir 6:30 Dortmund 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 AA/AL-ANON	11 5:30 Congregation Christmas Party	12 9:00 Habitat Work Group
13 3 rd Sunday in Advent 8:30 Service of Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Ed 10:30 Service of Holy Communion 10:30 Sunday School / Nursery 11:45 Coffee Hour 11:45 Chancel Choir	14 9:30 Bible Study	15 4:30 BNYC 5:00 Lectio Divina 7:00 Advent Program w/dessert and coffee 7:30 Yoga	16 12:00 Trinity Lunch 4:00 Christmas Tree Decorating 6:00 BNYC 7:00 Committee Meetings	17 10:00 Staff Meeting 10:00 Christian Action 12:00 Staff Christmas Party 6:00 Youth Choir 6:00 Chapel Choir 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 AA/AL-ANON	18	19
20 4 th Sunday in Advent 8:30 Service of Holy Communion w/chapel choir 9:30 Adult Ed 10:30 Service of Holy Communion 10:30 Sunday School / Nursery 11:45 Coffee Hour 11:45 Chancel Choir	21 No Bible Study	22 4:30 Instrumental rehearsal 5:00 Lectio Divina 6:00 AA Christmas Party 6:30 Worship Asst. Christmas rehearsal 6:45 Chancel rehearsal 7:00 Advent Program w/dessert and coffee	23 12:00 Trinity Lunch	24 12:00 Estonians 5:00 Family Service 9:00 Service at Parkside 9:45 Preservice music 10:30 Festival Service	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> 10:30 Christmas Worship at Parkside (2 Wallace Avenue) CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	26
27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist 8:30 am Service of Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Ed 10:30 Service of Holy Communion w/baptism 10:30 Sunday School / Nursery 11:45 Coffee Hour <i>Happy Birthday Pastor Buerk</i>	28 No Bible Study	29 5:00 Lectio	30 12:00 Trinity Lunch 6:00 Wedding rehearsal	31 6:00 Brockman/Clark Wedding	1 <i>New Year's Day</i> CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 <i>Happy Birthday Carol Littlefield</i>

New News for the Newsletter!!

In 2010, our "Church Paper" will be available online. You have a choice to make. Every recipient with an e-mail address on file will be sent a reminder that the latest edition of the newsletter is available, along with our embedded link to the site. If you wish to receive a print edition, you must communicate that to the church office (716) 886-2400 as soon as possible. If you have an e-mail address, please send us a note to htlcofelca@aol.com.

Thank you.



OUR CHURCH PAPER
1080 Main Street (near North)
Buffalo, NY 14209-2389
(716) 886-2400
Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Buffalo, New York
Permit No. 2467