



THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF ON LINE EDITION

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2010

Annual Meeting Set

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be Sunday January 31 following the worship service. You are invited to bring some finger foods to share as we gather to conduct the business of our congregation.

It has been a year of transition for Good Shepherd as we completed the first year of a two year experiment with a part time pastor. The difficult economic climate of our nation underscored the need for our congregation to try this option, and it has been successful in helping us reach our goal of stabilizing our financial situation. While the final numbers for the year are not yet available as this newsletter goes to print, the November reports were most encouraging, showing that we had managed to pay our bills in a timely manner and stop the cycle of borrowing extensively from our designated fund ac-

counts.

At this year's meeting we will review the ministry reports for 2009, vote on a budget for 2010, and have an opportu-

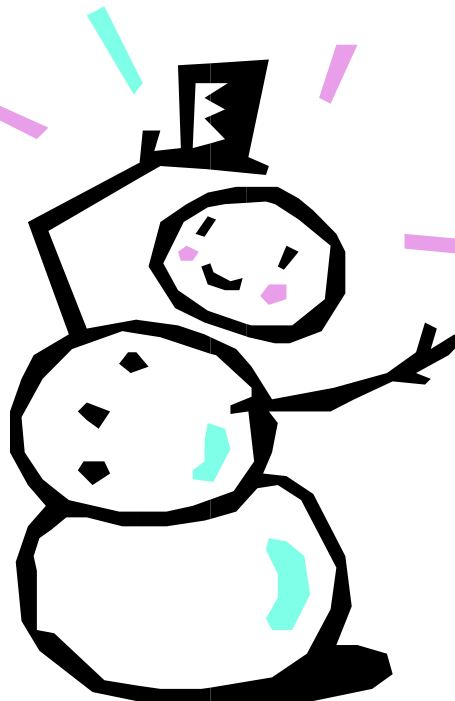
nity to share with one another our "highs and lows" for the year ending and our hopes for the year ahead.

We will also be electing new members to the Congregational Council, a nominating committee for 2010, and one person to serve on the Endowment Fund Committee.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting and learn more about our congregation. All confirmed members are eligible to vote and to be elected to various positions.

Your Congregational Council has done an exceptional job of leading our community of faith in these difficult times and they are to be commended for all their work.

Please plan on being present and participating in this year's annual meeting: together we are strong.



The "Snow Date" for the annual meeting is Feb. 7.

Another Christmas "Thank you" goes out to the Women of the ELCA for their gift of the beautiful Wise Men banner that has been hanging in our sanctuary and to Andrea Nelson for making the beautiful blue Angel banner hanging in the sanctuary. They have truly enriched our worship space.

Thank you!

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Thank You!

Our holiday celebrations were superb thanks to the efforts of a huge number of people. Sue Blakemore and the choir were outstanding this year, as were our holiday soloists Sue Scheib and Madeleine Blakemore. Our special musi-

cians- Michael Krohn on violin, Betsy Kopyc on harp, and Bradley Gannon and Emilia McGrath on trumpet-added so much.

Thanks to David and Brenda Houdlette for getting our Christmas tree for us, and to

the crew of volunteers who decorated it and took down decorations.

Thanks to our new acolyte Dustin Wittkopp who volunteered at such a busy time of year.

It was a great team effort!



Upcoming Events/Activities

Mark your calendars now for a new social activity that we will be offering in 2010: Fifth Sunday Food. On every fifth Sunday we will have a special opportunity to share a meal together and some fellowship activities so that we can all become better acquainted. The first of our Fifth Sunday Food days is actually our Annual Meeting in January, but others follow in May, August and October. For those 3 dates we will be having a themed pot luck gathering in the late afternoon/early evening period for a supper together. More information will be posted nearer to the dates but we wanted you to begin thinking about them now. February 17 is Ash Wed. so once again

we will be celebrating Mardi Gras on Feb. 16 ! This will be another Cajun Cooking themed dinner, complete with costumes and prizes for the best costumes, along with other fun activities. In January we have the following events on the calendar: WELCA will meet on Saturday, January 9 at 9:00 a.m. in



Got an activity to post? Contact Pastor.

Duehring Hall. This is a change from their usual time/date so please make note of this. The Men's Breakfast group will meet Tuesday January 5 and January 19th at the Fair Grounds Café in Topsham. The Book Club will meet at 6:30 on Thursday January 14 at the church. Congregational Council will meet on the fourth Monday in January (the 25th) rather than at their usual date. The meeting begins at 6:30. As always watch your bulletins.

First Communion Classes Begin in January

The children in grades one through three will be studying Holy Communion with Pastor Rebecca for the first four Sundays in January. The ELCA does not have a "set age" for first communion. The average age of first communion is now second grade, but there are congregations that wait later and some that offer the sacrament earlier.

One is properly prepared to receive the gift of Holy Communion if one comes with a believing heart.

Good Shepherd has always tried to be flexible, knowing that our members have moved here from home congregations with widely varying practices. We periodically provide age appropriate instruction for our children and let their parents determine when the child is ready to begin sharing the sacrament of the table with us. There are three young people who will be taking part in the classes in January

and we hope that all three will soon be joining us at the table of our Lord as they grow in faith. The trend for earlier communion complements Confirmation instruction as the children age. They have more practical experience in the life of the church upon beginning confirmation instruction and are ready to think more deeply about it because they are actively participating. Keep all of our children in your prayers as they grow in faith.

Caroling Party Success

Mel Banton worked her holiday magic and recruited one of the largest groups of carolers ever to bring holiday cheer to residents of local nursing homes on December 22. Over twenty people gathered for a soup supper at church and then were off to sing. Sandy Schmidt had the happy chore of announcing that the group had received a request for a special appearance, so one more stop was added to the

list of visitation sites. The group experimented with adding foreign language carols to their repertoire this year with mixed success, but they hope to get in some more practice and keep singing in many languages. Carol Duehring and Pastor Rebecca stayed at church to prepare the candles for the Christmas Eve candlelight service and



Thanks, Mel, for taking care of the caroling party.

to fix hot spiced punch for the returning singers. If you did not get to take part in this fun event this year, please consider joining us next year. It is a joy to share Christmas carols with people who are shut in and it is also a lot of fun to spend time with one another.



January Birthday Celebrations

It's been a while since we have had a newsletter, so we missed several fall and winter birthdays and anniversaries and we apologize for that. The newsletter has been one of the transition pieces that has been a little "erratic".

But it is January and we have a fresh start in wishing our friends well on their special days!

There are no wedding anniversaries this month, but the following folks are celebrating birthdays:

Heather Preston-Weeks, Jan. 1

Jordan Duncan, January 1

Eileen Leighton, January 6

Edie Rentz, January 13

Bill Nelson, January 13

Christine Sander, Jan. 16

Joshua McGrath, Jan. 24

Please be sure to wish these people the best on their special days.

If we have accidentally skipped your birthday or anniversary this month, please contact the church office so that we can correct our files. Special days on the church calendar for January include:



Jan. 6: Epiphany of our Lord

Jan. 10: Baptism of our Lord

Jan. 18: Confession of St. Peter and the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 24: St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor

January 25: The Conversion of St. Paul and the end of the week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

January 26: St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

A Stewardship Letter

Over the next three weeks we members of Good Shepherd are going to be thinking about how our use of the financial resources God has entrusted to us is an important part of this walk. Through letters, bulletin inserts, temple talks, and sermons we will strive to grow closer to Jesus as we walk together. The great poet Robert Frost once wrote, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." On our walk with Jesus, it is important that we are on the correct road.

When it comes to financial stewardship, some people ask the question, "How much of my money does the church need?" This question will send us down the wrong road. It is a question that Jesus never encourages us to ask. It is a question that is based on several wrong assumptions.

Other people ask, "How generously does God call on me to respond to all the blessings God has showered upon me?" This question will send us down the correct

"How generously does God call me to respond?"

road. When you think about your use of the financial resources God has entrusted to you, it is important to remember that the resources you have still belong to God and are placed in your care and management. It is also

important to remember that when Jesus talks about giving, he never talks about the need of the church to receive; he always talks about the need of the giver to

give as an expression of a sincere faith.

As we walk with Jesus over the next three weeks, be sure to be on the correct road. Think about all God has entrusted to you. Think about your need to give as a part of your faith in Jesus. Ask yourself, "How generously does God call on me to respond?"

In Christ,

The Stewardship Committee of GSLC

Leslie, Kevin and Carol

About our pledges for 2010

You may have noticed from our introductory e-mail letter that this year's pledge cards are for a six month period rather than a year. The economy is uncertain and many of us are in job transitions at this time. There are signs of recovery nationwide, but that recovery may reach us at different times. It seemed faithful to ask our membership to consider making their pledges for six months only, knowing that they will be able to make new ones at the end of that period for the remainder of the year. As always, you can revise your pledge at any time by contacting Betsy Schmidt our financial secretary. We are hopeful that this new way of pledging will encourage more people to make a pledge to the mission and ministry of GSLC.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

330 Maine Street
Brunswick, ME 04011

Phone: 207-725-6561

E-mail: gslc@zwi.net

Carol's Office hours are usually Monday through Wednesday from 10:00 am—2:00 pm. Please leave a message if you call during those times and no one answers: we do frequently have to go back and forth between our buildings and get the mail. Also, if we are in a meeting or discussion with someone when you call, we do not pick up the telephone. We are happy to call you back as soon as the meeting ends, so please—always leave a message!

Pastor tries to be in the office on Monday and Tuesday mornings and Wednesday afternoon from 12:30 to 1:30. She tries to schedule visits on Wednesday afternoons to our homebound members and friends. She is available to meet with people by appointment at other times. Feel free to call her at home (442-0888) or e-mail her at any time: revrebecca@rcn.com if you have questions, concerns, or would simply like to have coffee and talk.

A Caring, Compassionate Community.

The Last Word

Thank you for the very generous gift given to me at Christmas. It was very much appreciated and will certainly help us take a vacation this year to our favorite haunt in Cooperstown, NY.

Gifts are always special: they remind us of how much people care. They remind us of how attentive others are to our tastes, our dreams, our interests. They also remind us of how crazy generous some folks are: it never ceases to amaze me that those family and friends who are really needing to watch their budgets are usually the ones who give so extravagantly. Scolding them never helps: they always respond, "But giving makes us feel good!"

It probably seems odd to have a stewardship campaign in January. We never do things like this, but a series of odd events came together that made January suddenly seem like the perfect time to think about how crazy generous God is to us, and how much fun it would be if we could learn to become more crazy generous toward God.

The budget is already prepared, so this campaign has absolutely nothing to do with meeting the budget. We all have a pretty good idea of how much it takes for our congregation to operate. You consistently give enough to keep things going.

This campaign, however is about more than keeping things going. It is about the real mission



In January we begin our Walk with Jesus

and ministry of this gathered body of Christ. It is about how we walk with Jesus, how we listen to Jesus' teachings, and how we give generously of ourselves: financially, to be sure, but just as importantly, how we give of ourselves through volunteering our time, sharing our talents, trying new ministries, attending events beyond our own congregation. I guess you could say that this stewardship campaign has the potential to open us up to new ways of being Christian here and now, in the communities where we live, work and worship. It is a journey that we will take together with Jesus.

It is also an opportunity for each of you to be in conversation about your life of faith. What would make your faith grow? What would spur you to study more, worship more, pray more, and give more of yourself to Jesus? These are the things I am thinking about as this campaign begins because I know how much I have received from our Lord Jesus Christ, and what a blessing each of you are to me. I want to become crazy generous. Pastor Rebecca