

### **MIDWEEK ADVENT DEVOTIONALS**

This year, for our Advent Wednesday night soup and devotional journey we will focus on four facets of Christmas:

Dec. 2 *The Promise of Christmas* Mt.1:13-25  
Dec. 9 *The Peace of Christmas* Lk 2:8-20  
Dec 16 *The Faith of Christmas* Lk 2:15-21  
Dec 23 *The Christ of Christmas* Lk 2:1-14

We will meet at the church at 6pm for soup dinner and the devotional will begin at 6:45pm. Please sign-up to provide soup and/or bread on these Wednesdays.

### **CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

There will be two services on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>: 5pm (for families with children) and 11pm. Both will close with candles.

### **BIBLE STUDY ON SCIENCE AND FAITH**

Pastor Bjoern leads a Bible study on science and faith on Sunday mornings at 9:15. Topics include: uses and misuses of creation, science and faith in an evolving creation (ways people of faith refer to life's origin), preaching and teaching in a scientific world, & preaching in consonance with science. Come and discuss the ideas presented by the writers of these articles.

### **WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

We will meet for a Christmas potluck at Susan Lincoln's home on Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:15pm. Bring your favorite casserole, salad, dessert, or ? We'll savor the season and enjoy the spirit within each of us.

### **CHRISTMAS GOODIES**

Our local food bank is serving more people in need this season. Since this is the season of giving and sharing and a time when a lot of us are baking goodies and making craft items, it is a good time to have a sale with proceeds going to the food bank.

We will have a sale on **DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**, FOLLOWING THE WORSHIP SERVICE. Bring your baked goods and craft items ready to sell in disposable containers and marked with a price the day of the sale. If you are not a baker, then please come and purchase items. For more information, call June at 463-5850.

**THIS IS THE LAST BULK MAILING! TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE CHURCH MOUSE NEWSLETTER, READ NEXT PAGE**

### **THE GIVING TREE**

This year we will again participate in the Vashon Island Youth and Family Services drive to provide gifts for needy children in our community. Look for the tree to be set up in the Fellowship Hall with cards giving a child's age, gender, and Christmas gift wish. The gifts should be wrapped with the gift request tag attached. Help make Christmas joy for someone in need in our community. The gifts will be collected by Youth and Family Services on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **COMPASS CENTER CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVE**

To help make Christmas joyful for the people the Center serves, the Compass Center has provided a wish list, which includes such items as gift certificates to grocery stores, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, etc. The full list is on the table in the Fellowship Hall. The gifts need to be received by the Center by Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. For more information, call Andrea Steele at 206-357-3138.

### **INVITATION TO PASTOR'S OPEN HOUSE**

The Meinhardt's would like the congregation of VLC to come to an Open House at the Parsonage (Located behind the church) on Sunday, Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> between 4pm and 8pm. Food and beverage will be provided. If you would like to bring a favorite dish or dessert to share, please let the pastor or Lynn know when you RSVP at 463-9687. Please respond by the 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **BLESSING OF HOMES**

There will be a blessing of homes on two consecutive Saturdays, Jan. 08<sup>th</sup> and Jan 15<sup>th</sup>. This is when the "Star Singers" will once again bless the homes of those who request the blessing. If you would like to have your home blessed this Epiphany, please sing the request sheet in the Fellowship Hall or call the church office at 463-2655.

### **VASHON CHORALE'S YULETIDE CONCERT**

Will be on Sat. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm and Sunday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at Bethel Church. They will perform Vivaldi's *Gloria* and pieces by NW composers. Tickets are available at island bookstores for \$12.50 and \$10.00 for seniors and students.

### **POINSETTIAS FOR THE CHANCEL**

Please consider providing a poinsettia to decorate the chancel. You can either purchase one or give a donation of \$13.00 toward the purchase of a plant. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall and a bulletin insert.

### **THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST CHURCH MOUSE AN ELECTRONIC MOUSE STARTS JAN. 2010**

In January of next year The Church Mouse will go electronic. There will be three ways in which you can receive it.

1. You can go to our website at [www.vashonlutheranchurch.org](http://www.vashonlutheranchurch.org) or
2. You can sign-up to have it e-mailed to you or
3. You can sign-up to continue to have a hard copy mailed to your home address. *You need to contact the church office to have the Church Mouse mailed to you or to give your e-mail address. You can e-mail your wish to [VLC98070@centurytel.net](mailto:VLC98070@centurytel.net). (VLC is case sensitive so use capital letters).*

### **IFCH SPONSORED DINNERS**

This year again VLC will again participate in providing the IFCH Community Dinners for the homeless. We will prepare and serve five dinners during the first five Tuesdays and Thursdays in December, (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>). There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, contact Jim Dam, 567-5279

### **ALCOHOL-FREE NEW YEARS EVE PARTY**

There will be an alcohol free New Year's Eve party at the Presbyterian Church from 7pm to 10pm on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. This is a community-wide, family friendly event, not a religious event. There will be interactive video game, foosball and bingo. Age-specific games will be provided. Coffee and ice cream sundaes will be provided. Bring a favorite snack or non-alcoholic beverage to share for the evening. For more information, call Rev. Dan Houston, 206-948-7746.

### **WORSHIP AT THE COMMUNITY CARE CENTER**

Our next worship at the Care Center is January 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:15am. If you would like to participate, contact Pastor Bjoern.

### **BLOOD DRIVE**

Puget Sound Blood Center will again hold a blood drive at our church on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup> from 1-7pm. Come and give blood and save a life if you are able.

### **THRIVENT FINANCIAL OFFERS CHOICE**

Starting in 2010 a new program, Thrivent Choice, will be offered. It is designed to give members choice, and for eligible members, one of the choices will be directing charitable funds to your congregation. In addition, all adult benefit and associate members will be able to vote on how to direct charitable funding among a short list of national charities. For more information about the program: [www.thrivent.com/ThriventChoiceInfo](http://www.thrivent.com/ThriventChoiceInfo).

### **A SERVICE of PRAYER and HEALING**

We will have the opportunity to quietly gather for prayer and healing in the Lutheran church sanctuary from 6 – 6:30 p.m. the first Sunday of each month. *Our next service will be **December 6th at 6pm.***

**Regardless of who you are and what you carry, you are welcome in this place. Come to pray aloud or silently.**

**Come forward to be prayed for through naming your concerns or retaining your silence.**

**Or...simply come to sit for a while and unwind with your own thoughts.**

No pressure, no intrusion...A simple service without music...without liturgy...in a candle-lit sanctuary where we gather to hear a few readings, pray and be prayed for, and sit and just be.

*The Rev. Jeff Larson, Ph.D. is a Lutheran minister and clinical psychologist called by Vashon Lutheran Church to provide counseling services to the community. As a member of the body of believers he feels that spiritual health in its many shapes and forms is key to attaining psychological and physical health.*

### **PASSION PLAY TOUR & MORE IN 2010**

The Passion Play takes place every ten years and the next time in 2010. I will lead a group trip June 21- July 2, 2010. Goodspeed & Bach have put together a spectacular trip. The *trip is custom-made* and includes entrance fees to the play, many museums, a garden, and Heidelberg castle. Breakfasts and some meals are included.

We will visit the following cities: Heidelberg, Strassbourg, Colmar, Geneva, Zurich, Konstanz and Mainau, Neuschwantstein, beautiful Alpine village of Graswang (during the passion play), Berchtesgaden, and Salzburg.

We put a *cap amount* on the expenses for land-travel. The more people who go on the trip, the less expensive it will be. Land Tour Cost (double occupancy) for 25 travelers is \$2699. per person. Each traveler will need to make their own flight arrangements.

## God Comes Down to Earth

The forebodings of Christmas are everywhere. The story of Jesus' birth is not a "once upon a time" fairy tale. Rather, it is an event that occurred in the midst of human history. Paul wrote in Galatians (4:4), "when the fullness of time [Greek: kairos] had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman." Paul used the term "kairos" to indicate the divine in-breaking into our human reality with the birth of his Son, Jesus. The Evangelist Luke (2:1-20) places Jesus' birth at a particular place at a particular time in world history when Augustus was emperor. Still, there are many people for whom the story of God's Incarnation is incomprehensible. They cannot, and don't, want to believe that God has become flesh – a person like you and me. In the form of a small child, God came down to earth!

Recently, I have heard the following anecdote about a man who did not believe in God. This story is probably fiction, yet it carries a lot of truth. This man did not hesitate to let others know how he felt about God, religion, and religious festivals. His wife, however, believed; she raised her children in the Christian tradition: to have faith in God and Jesus – despite her husband's disparaging comments.

One Christmas Eve, she asked her husband to come along to the church service, to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But he refused. He said, "That story is nonsense!" And he added, **"Why would God lower himself to come to earth as a person? That's plainly ridiculous!"**

With that, his wife and children left for the service, leaving the man home alone on Christmas Eve. A while later, the winds outside grew stronger, and the snow turned into a blizzard. Looking outside the window, all the man could see was a blinding snowstorm. He sat down to relax by the fireplace. Then, he heard a loud thump. Something had hit the window. He looked out, but he couldn't see more than just a few feet. When the snow let up a little, he went outside to see what could have been the beating on the window.

In the field near the house, he saw a flock of geese. Apparently, they got caught in a snowstorm on their way south. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food and shelter. The man felt sorry for the geese. He wanted to help them. He thought that his barn would be a good place for them to stay. So, he walked over to the barn, opened the door, and waited for the geese to go inside.

But the geese made no attempt to go into the barn where they would find shelter. They just fluttered around, aimlessly. So, the man tried to get their attention, but no matter what he tried, he rather scared the geese and scattered them in every direction except toward the barn. Nothing he did could get them into the barn. "Why don't they follow me?!" he wondered out loud. "Can't they see that this is the place where they can survive the storm?"

He thought for a moment and realized that they just would not follow a human. "If only I were a goose," he said, "then I could save them." Then he had an idea: he went into the barn, got one of his own geese, and carried it on his arms as he circled around behind the flock of wild geese. He then released his goose. It flew through the flock, straight back into the barn. And one-by-one, the other geese followed it to safety.

As he watched all the geese going into the barn, the words that he had spoken just a few moments ago revisited him, "If only I were a goose, then I could save them." He then thought about what he had said to his wife earlier, "Why would God want to be like us? That's ridiculous." Suddenly, it all made sense. That is why God had come. We are like these geese: blind, lost, perishing. God sent his Son to become like us so He could show us the way to save us. – Suddenly, he understood, why Christ had come. Years of disbelief vanished.

Christmas is the story that God has come in our midst to save an otherwise lost humanity. God had to be born among us: truly flesh, truly human. In Jesus, God came looking for us, to bring our lives back on track ... to bring us peace and salvation.

I wish you a blessed season of Advent and a wonderful celebration of God's Incarnation – in this time, and beyond!

Bjoern E. Meinhardt, Pastor

## LESSONS FOR DECEMBER

### 2 Advent

Dec 6, 2009

First Reading

Mal 3:1-4

Psalm

Luke 1:68-79

Second Reading

Phil 1:3-11

Gospel

Luke 3:1-6

### 3 Advent

Dec 13, 2009

First Reading

Zeph 3:14-20

Psalm

Isa 12:2-6

Second Reading

Phil 4:4-7

Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

### 4 Advent

Dec 20, 2009

First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

Psalm

Luke 1:46b-55

Second Reading

Heb 10:5-10

Gospel

Luke 1:39-55

### Christmas Eve

Dec 24, 2009

First Reading

Isa 9:2-7

Psalm

96

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

### 1 Christmas

Dec. 27, 2009

First Reading

1 Sam 2:18-20, 26

Psalm

148

Second Reading

Col 3:12-17

Gospel

Luke 2:41-52

## HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY

Adam Hoagland	Dec. 3
Hannah Scheer	Dec. 10
Meredith Hackett	Dec. 12
Carolyn Burdette	Dec. 12
Kimberly Scheer	Dec. 13
Patte Wagner	Dec. 15
Gretchen Yates	Dec. 20
Stamper, David	Dec. 22
Reynold Hokenson	Dec. 22
Holly Zapel	Dec. 23
Rick Powelson	Dec. 23
Tristan Carbery	Dec. 23

## HAPPY DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

Mark & Kimberly Scheer	Dec. 6
Gretchen & Jack Yates	Dec. 21
Bruce & Penelope Cleland	Dec. 29

## BAPTISM SCHEDULE FOR 2010

During 2010, baptism will be a special part of our worship on :

January 10<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, Baptism of our Lord  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sat, Easter Vigil  
May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sunday, Day of Pentecost  
November 7<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, All Saints Sunday,  
December 25<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, Christmas Day

## DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

12/3	Thurs	Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia 1552
12/6	Sun	Nicolas, Bishop of Myra, c.342
12/7	Mon	Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397
12/11	Fri	Lars Skrefsrud, missionary to India, 1910
12/14	Mon	John of the Cross, renewer of the Church, 1591
12/21	Mon	St. Thomas, Apostle
12/26	Sat	St Stephen, Deacon & Martyr
12/27	Sun	St. John, Apostle & Evangelist
12/28	Mon	The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

## VASHON THRIFTWAY 1% COMMUNITY DONATION PROGRAM

Remember to save your Vashon Thriftway receipts to be used for our missions program. Thriftway will donate 1% of the total to VLC. Remember the rules:

- Cash register receipts must be from Vashon Thriftway.
- Cash register receipts must be for purchases made by **members** of Vashon Lutheran Church. Receipts turned in cannot be more than one year old.
- Purchasers must sign each receipt, and indicate their phone number.
- Receipts may be placed in the indicated receptacle in the Fellowship Hall.

Thanks for helping  
*Stewardship Chair*

**Articles for The Mouse, due Dec. 20th**