

The Herald

March 2007 • Bethany Lutheran Church • <http://www.bethanyportland.org/>

From Our Pastor—

An Easter Vigil at Bethany Saturday, April 7 at 7 PM

The Easter vigil was the service that made Easter Sunday truly Easter for me. I wonder if an Easter Vigil at Bethany will be as meaningful for you.

In my early twenties, maybe not unlike you, I attended the services during Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter morning service(s). I saw the connection between Thursday and Friday but always felt a great void between Good Friday and Easter Sunday! What exactly was missing? What was getting in the way of experiencing the fullness and joy of Easter morning, celebrating the crucified and risen Lord of life, Jesus Christ? On Sunday morning, like many of you, I found myself involved in various roles from helping with the youth breakfast to making sure enough folding chairs were available for extra seating outside the sanctuary. Yet, there was a deep, empty feeling inside of me from the moment I left the Good Friday service straight through Easter Sunday. And...maybe for good reason too! The contrasts of these two services were so extreme. Good Friday focused on Christ's crucifixion; Easter morning service – Christ's resurrection. Good Friday's tone was of darkness and death. Easter morning's tone: light and life. Where was the bridge that would propel us from the disciplines of Lent: prayer, fasting, and works of love to a spirit of joy, praise, and thanksgiving on Easter morning? Surely, some type of liturgy must exist to foster our sense of connecting all of these dialectics of death and life, darkness and light, sadness and joy. There is such a liturgy! It's called an Easter Vigil.

An Easter vigil service, beginning at sundown Saturday evening, is the liturgical link between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The focus of this service/liturgy is retelling the story of God and his people beginning with God's creation. Numerous, selected readings give breadth and depth of God's mighty acts of what God has done for us beginning with his people Israel. We journey through the Old Testament and then celebrate God's promise to be with us always in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We watch the paraments change from dark purple (of Good Friday) to white, celebrating our crucified and risen Lord now reigning among us. We share the sacrament of Holy Communion and give witness to what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We celebrate the sacrament of Holy Baptism for those, young and old alike, who desire to be a part of our faith community and claimed as God's very own.

Come and share in this joyous, connective event, as we celebrate the sacraments and the life that God is building in and through us at Bethany!

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff*

Holy Week and Easter includes Easter Vigil Service

April 1, 9:30 & 11:00am – Passion/Palm Sunday – will draw upon the voices of the people gathered at the **9:30am** Traditional Service as worshippers participate in **The Passion Narrative**. In this story, we hear our own story as it is played out by Christ's disciples and the ultimate betrayal by all except God alone. Those who gather at the **11:00am** Contemporary Service will hear a portion of the Passion story from the Gospel of St. Mark. Please come with voices ready and ears willing to hear this story of God's ultimate redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

April 5, 7:00pm – Maundy Thursday Worship – Our Lenten journey concludes this evening with our corporate Confession of Sin and individual Laying on of Hands for the Absolution. Just as we have struggled throughout our Lenten Pilgrimage with sin and death, so we receive God's consolation with the laying on of hands as individuals as we worship together corporately. The service begins with a welcome, hymn, and then sermon followed by prayer, our readings, communion, and then ending with the stripping of the altar. The stripping of the altar symbolizes the humiliation Jesus suffered at the hands of the soldiers. We close the service by reading Psalm 22 and then depart in silence in preparation for the solemn observance of Good Friday. This evening, there is no Benediction or Dismissal. Come experience this powerful liturgy and the ultimate love which Jesus shares with those even as death draws near for him!

April 6, 7:00pm – Good Friday Worship – Together, we ponder the paschal mystery of God's salvation given to us through the death of God's only son. Our worship encapsulates a time of deep reflection with Scripture and a hymn appropriately chosen. If you have never been to a Good Friday worship, you are encouraged to join us this week. A monologue by **Joseph of Arimathea**, the person who went to claim Jesus' body, will be shared in lieu of a preached sermon. Good Friday makes Easter Sunday truly a celebration of priceless worth!

April 7, 7:00pm – Easter Vigil Worship – Come hear the story of God's people beginning with creation in the book of Genesis. A pattern of Word, prayer, and musical response with the spoken word filling a major portion of the liturgy. The traditional preaching of a sermon is omitted from this service. Candidates for baptism, young and old, are especially encouraged to participate in this service which was designed when adult baptisms were common in the church. The Eucharist will be celebrated following the changing of the paraments from purple (of Holy Week) to white (signifying Easter). The contrast of darkness and light, sadness and joy, death to resurrection will be apparent by the conclusion of this unique service.

April 8, 9:30 & 11:00am – The Resurrection of our Lord Service – Come celebrate Easter at the **9:30am** Traditional Service or the **11:00am** Contemporary Service. Join us for the Easter brunch which will be served from 10:30 until noon.

1,000 Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 7, 11am

(Rain date – April 14)

Members of the outreach team have decided to host a “1,000 Egg” Easter Egg Hunt across the street at Wilshire Park on the vigil of Easter. Pastor Jeff is working with the city to secure the park permit.

There are many ways that members at Bethany can participate in this Easter egg extravaganza.

1. Join us on Wednesday Activity Nights through April 4 as we stuff and prepare plastic eggs for this event.
2. Come to the event itself. This is a great way to see for yourself the number of children that live in the Beaumont-Wilshire neighborhood surrounding Bethany.
3. Make a donation. We need plastic eggs – It takes many bags of plastic eggs and small candies to fill 1,000 Easter eggs.
4. Pray – for those who participate and for all residents of the Beaumont-Wilshire neighborhood.

Remember, the first step in reaching out is making a connection with adults and children. The more each one of us is involved in reaching out, the greater the potential we have for impacting lives and the neighborhood around us. Our effectiveness in reaching others depends on all of us! Mark your calendar for **Saturday, April 7, at 11am.**

Twenty-three Attend the Intergenerational Gathering

Thanks to everyone who attended our first Intergenerational Gathering with the education theme: Faith and Values in a War-torn Country! Our hospitality group did a wonderful job in preparing and arranging our potluck meal together. Our gathering provided a terrific time for fellowship, and also served to remind us that even though we may have different worship style preferences, we are still indeed one body in Christ!

A brief recap by Pastor Jeff: While war and politics are a hot topic to this day, I led those gathered to reflect back over six decades ago to elicit responses from the group as to how a nation at war shaped their faith and/or values to this present day. I used a visual aid in starting the conversation – a 1944, January 12th issue of the *St. Paul Dispatch* newspaper whose front page read – “Battle over Reich, Greatest Ever – NAZI PLANE LOSS MAY BE 300.” Many of us, myself included, have not experienced war at the level that many of our Bethany people have. When I posed the question of what values were learned from going through such a time, one person responded “We learned the value of ‘getting along’ with one another.” Another person identified the value of “hard work” and another said “using what you had.” Each generation has something to offer to other generations. While values may differ from one generation to another, that difference does not diminish a person’s ability to participate fully as a disciple of Christ. Jesus’ words and witness, many more times than not, confronted values which were not in alignment with God’s will for all people. While our values and the generations which drive them are important for our lives, our faith through Christ will always call us back to values important for bringing in the kingdom of God. Thanks for your participation in this first time event at Bethany!

We are scheduling more **Intergenerational Events** on an every-other-month basis. Our next **Intergenerational Event** is scheduled for **May 6 at noon.** We hope you will join us!

Third Annual Day Camp for Kids ages 5-12

Bethany will once again host Camp Lutherwood's Day Camp which will be held Monday – Friday, **July 30 – Aug. 3**, from 9 AM – 3 PM. This camping experience, for children ages 5-12, allows children to experience, in an outdoor setting, what a Christian summer camping program is like without leaving home. Staff from Camp Lutherwood along with dedicated adult volunteers from Bethany Church guide the week as the children sing, play, discover, touch creation, do crafts, act, participate in Bible Adventure Time, worship...Did we mention HAVE FUN! Cost for the week is \$40 and includes lunch and two snacks each day and a field trip to Grant Pool. Scholarships are available for those in need. Contact Bethany Lutheran Church for registration information at (503)284-3836 or go to our website at www.bethanyportland.org and download the registration form.

Using the new ELW Hymnal

The second Sunday in Lent was the first Sunday for utilizing the new ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) hymnal, as we sang several of the printed hymns. Pastor Jeff and Organist Phil Baker, along with Church Council, have chosen to begin full usage of ELW following the decommissioning service for the LBW (Lutheran Book of Worship) hymnal which will be scheduled for a Sunday after Easter.

Currently, over twenty hymnals have been purchased and named as memorials. There is still time to purchase one in honor or in memory of someone that you know and love. The cost of each hymnal ordered was \$17.50 (not including shipping charges). Memorials may be given in memory or honor of someone if congregational worshipers would like to purchase a hymnal(s) in memory or honor of someone. Please indicate on the memo line of your check ELW memorial gift (if the person is deceased) or ELW honorary gift (if the person is living). A memorial/honorary designation sticker will be placed in the front of a hymnal in memory or in honor of the person in whom you designated the gift. If you have questions, please contact the church office at (503)284-3836. Thank you!

Articles for Monthly Herald – Bottom Left Hand Slot of Church Boxes

If you have articles for publishing in the monthly Herald newsletter, please place them in the bottom left hand slot labeled Herald Articles/Information before the information due date (published on the calendar each month). We would appreciate your leaving your name with the article. Thank you!

Bethany Church Council

Your 2007 Church Council Members and Financial Officers are:

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Wanda Joaquin
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