

The Herald

March 2006 • Bethany Lutheran Church • <http://www.bethanyportland.org/>

Pastor's Reflects on Annual Meeting...

My thanks to all who attended our January 29 annual meeting. I especially thank those who attended last year's meeting and who came back again this year not knowing what to expect. Our format changed quite dramatically this year in how we gathered for our meeting. Sitting behind tables and chairs this year just would not do for us. Following a model we learned at our all congregational meeting on January 14, we decided to sit in one big circle. This simple seating arrangement, in my opinion, assisted us greatly because it created an environment of equality. No one was higher or greater than the other. We were joined as one body, face to face and eye to eye, listening to reports and speaking up so everyone had a chance to hear what was being shared.

There is something quite powerful when people come together in the form of a circle. A circle, as we may know, is a symbol for completeness or wholeness. When a circle is broken, then the shape is fragmented and not complete. When the circle's fragmentation is mended, then the circle is brought to wholeness again.

I sense this "being made whole again" is the message we have to share with others. God in Christ Jesus comes to us through the Word and our sacraments time and time again to make us whole. To say in simple words "You are mine. I love you and forgive you. Your life, once again, is restored." This is our eternal gift which Jesus Christ has given to us. Our coming together corporately to share in Scripture, creeds, and confession is an instrument of God to center us in Christ's creating and redeeming word. God's word continues to create life from death, hope from despair, joy from sadness and everything in between. We can count on this Word of life like we can count on the many rainy and cloudy days during our winter season here in Portland. Without this gift of Christ, our lives would be forever fragmented, like a broken circle, longing to be complete. With God's love in Jesus Christ, this longing to know God's infinite love for us has been given to us all and will one day be complete. Like waters looking for a drain to flow into, God's priceless love seeks to fill our hearts and lives with a wellspring of life, empowering us as his disciples. When we live out our lives without Christ's love and forgiveness, we remain a broken people. When we live as Christ's disciples, we can count on redeeming, life-giving words, leading us to health and wholeness once again.

It is my continuous prayer that God not only gives us the tools and resources to carry out God's ministry here at Bethany, but also that we may listen and hear one another in our striving for greater wholeness and health once again.

My thanks to all of you for the encouragement that you continue to share with me and with each other as we listen as Christ's body to hear God's call! This call is no small thing which we have embarked upon together!!

Christ's peace –
Pastor Jeff

2006 Bethany Church Council

Barbara Andersen	Donna Frey	Phyllis Parker
Velma Book	Wanda Joaquin	LeDonna Schrumm
Eileen Eckart	Bill Markwart	Midori Suzuki

Five Week Exploration – Discerning Our Spiritual Gifts

Wednesdays in Lent – 6-7pm

How long has it been since you have invited someone to church? What barriers do we/other Christians have in sharing our faith with one another? ...With a neighbor/stranger/friend???

If the thought of being an evangelist scares you death, you are not alone. One statistic is that Lutherans invite a person to church every twenty-five years. Why is that the case? Is it us? Is it the people we ask? What expectations do we have when we do invite someone? Do we have more than just a casual relationship with them? If we have more than just a casual relationship with a neighbor/friend, when asked, what do we think they would say?

These are some of the questions that we will discuss in a five week exploration as we identify some evangelism tools as well as explore our spiritual gifts.

March 8 – “Me?... An evangelist??”

March 22 – “Evangelism and other Spiritual Gifts”

March 29 – “Taking a Spiritual Gift Inventory”

April 5 – “Discoveries in Spiritual Gifts”

April 12 – “Empowering Gifted People”

Discovering our spiritual gifts can be a powerful way to open up ways of empowering ourselves and one another to more passionate service to God. Maybe there is some hobby or interest but you have not been able to pin it down until now. The possibilities are endless when we open ourselves to discovery and empower each other in our findings.

Even if you must miss a session, try to come whenever you can – **Wednesdays at 6pm** –for an hour of educational time together.

If you are looking to add something to your Lenten pilgrimage, consider adding some great conversation around evangelism and spiritual gifts. What a great way to spend time together as we anticipate the coming resurrection of our Lord together!

Need a ride? We will pick you up and take you home. Please let us know!

Church Council Highlights

Council met Feb. 7 at 7pm. The following council officers were elected: **Bill Markwart**, President; **Phyllis Parker**, Vice President; and **Midori Suzuki**, Secretary. **Kathy Norton** will again serve as Treasurer and **Russ Reese** has agreed to continue as Financial Secretary for “a while.” The January Financial Secretary’s Report was received. The Jan. Treasurer Report will be available next month.

Committee reports and old business: Visitors with a son age 3 came to the 2/5/06 9:30am service and received cookies delivered by the Cookie Brigade. A Day Camp registration form is now up on our webpage, and an announcement will appear in the February Beaumont-Wilshire Newsletter.

Weekly Bible Study participants chose to meet Wednesdays at 11:30am (was Thursdays at 7pm); morning is easier for current participants, but inconvenient for any people who work during the day.

Volunteers now answer the office phone 10am-1pm, M-F, thanks to Mary Lou Yakymi and others.

New business: An all-congregation meeting will occur as originally scheduled at noon Feb.19.

Lent: we will host one midday Lenten service (date TBD). We will hold an Ash Wednesday evening service, but no other evening Lenten services are planned. Easter: services will be at 9:30 and 11:00. Brunch will be 10:30 to noon. An Easter Egg hunt is planned for April 15 [*see page 5*].

1,000 Easter Egg Hunt Planned for Saturday, April 15

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

Due to health concerns, we will be using plastic eggs and then filling them with candy. There are many ways that members at Bethany can participate in this Easter egg extravaganza.

- 1) 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. With good Easter egg hunting weather conditions, you might be amazed at the number of children from our neighborhood.
- 2) Make a donation: We need plastic eggs – It takes many bags of plastic eggs and small candies to create 1000 Easter eggs. Our biggest need is bags of plastic eggs.
- 3) Pray for those who participate and for our residents here in Beaumont-Wilshire neighborhood.

Remember, our 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 potential we have for impacting lives and the neighborhood around us. Our effectiveness in reaching others depends on all of us! Thanks for your consideration of joining us!

Remember to save the date: Saturday, April 15.

More for Kids ...

Youth Outings: Thanks to **Paul Peterson** and **Pastor Jeff** for leading the youth outing in February – bowling with **Christian, Twyla, McKenzie, Paul,** and **Pastor Jeff**. In March, **Paul** led four youth to Mt. Scott Community Pool, including Christian’s friend **Sam** who also attended Day Camp last summer. We so appreciate **Paul** as both youth advisor and Sunday school teacher who is so faithful to our youth and their growth in faith. Thanks **Paul!** Thanks also to **Midori Suzuki** for hosting the youth with pizza each month!

2006 Day Camp: *Spread the word!* Bethany will once again host a Day Camp from July 31 to Aug. 4 (Monday - Friday) from 9am to 3pm. This camping experience, for children ages 4-12, 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 of Bethany Church will 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 to make it affordable for those in need. Call the Bethany office for more information. A registration form is printed on the next two pages. For additional forms or for more information, call the church office at 503-284-3836 or go to www.bethanyportland.org.

Bethany Ministry News...

Pamela Thomas and **Mary Lou Yakimi** are hard at work designing a new banner for the season of Pentecost. The color for the season of Pentecost, our longest liturgical season of the year, is green which symbolizes life and growth. We give thanks for their dedication and look forward to the unveiling during the season of Pentecost.

A **big thank you** from Pastor Jeff to **Donna Frey** for doing some handy needle work in repairing the stoles that Pastor wears each Sunday. She even found a local dry cleaner who was able to do a thorough, yet delicate cleaning of them. We so appreciate her gift of time and talent!

Thanks to all of our **craft ladies** for their sharing time with our youth in our past Christmas ornament making. The **craft group** will start back up again on **Mondays** at **9:30 am** following Easter. If you have any questions or would like to join them, please contact **Neta Sala** at 503-287-2900 or **Ruth Sleasman** at 503-284-4789. You would be most welcome!

What a great birthday celebration for **Neta Sala's** 90th! May God bless and keep you **Neta!** **Thanks to** our ladies coordinating receptions during February and March: **LeDonna Schrumm, Phyllis Parker, Donna Frey, and Lou Ostlind.** Great job ladies!

We say goodbye to **Debbie Hohn**, our organist, whose last Sunday was Feb. 26. **Debbie's** sharing and musical gifts made a significant impact upon the faith community here at Bethany. She will certainly be missed!

We welcome **Phil Baker** who will serve as our organist through Easter Sunday. Please welcome **Phil** back with our thanks for being here with us!

Thanks to our **office phone answering volunteers** – **Mary Lou Yakimi, Barbara Andersen, Maliea Yakimi, and Ruth Sleasman.** Bethany also has need for other volunteers for small jobs that may take anywhere from ½ hour to 2 hours to complete. If you can spare a block of time in your schedule, please contact the church office 503-284-3836. Thank you!

May God's peace and promise fill the hearts and lives of those mourning the loss of loved ones: **Exa Adams** - Jan. 30; **Lee Huntley** - Feb. 2; **Ed Clark** - Feb. 3; **Esther Pumala** - Feb. 15 at age 100, and **Hal Ekstrom** - Feb. 26. We give thanks to God for their lives as they claim the promise of their baptism in faith!

A **huge thanks** to **Barbara Andersen** as pictorial directory coordinator and her crew for the two day photography session with Olan Mills. If you were not able to make it to Bethany during February for pictures, please call **Barbara** at 503-284-9319. Olan Mills has other locations where you may make an appointment.

We appreciate everyone who was able to make our congregational meeting on Sunday, Feb. 19, to discuss the content of our consultants' (**Mary Sellon** and **Dan Smith**) recommendations to us. It was a good start! We look forward to having more sharing in the months ahead as we all strive to move towards God's future!

Thanks to Ann and Jimmy Pulioff for so generously sharing the video of their trip to Europe and Macedonia! The next **"Going Like 60" Potluck** will be **March 23 at Noon.**