



BETHANY LIFE

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LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YOU EVERLASTING DOORS

December's Hymn of the Month, #339 in Lutheran Service Book, is "Lift Up Your Heads, You Everlasting Doors," and is based on Psalm 24:3-10.

**Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?
Who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.
He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.
Such is the generation of those who seek Him,
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.**

**Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
He is the King of glory.**

This is a processional Psalm, and would have been recited by Jesus and His family as they entered Jerusalem on their annual pilgrimage at Pass-over. It's the psalm used when the king enters his capital city—therefore a dramatic foreshadowing of Jesus entering His capital city as King and entering the world to establish His kingdom.

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Our hymn contains the ancient word “Sabaoth,” which is frequently confused with “Sabbath.” The Lord God of Sabaoth” is the God of angel armies (“Sabaoth” means “armies”). As long as we’re defining Hebrew words, “Hosanna” means “Save now” or “Save us now,” and “Messiah” means “Anointed One,” as Jesus is the King whom God the Father has anointed to rule forever.

Note how the hymn links the Old Testament (Psalm) with the New (Revelation). This reflects the very nature of the Revelation of St. John, which Christians find so compelling. One of the reasons we westerners find Revelation so hard to understand is that it relies so heavily on the Old Testament: only those who have a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament have the “vocabulary” to understand John’s Apocalypse.

Revelation 5:6 and following says, **I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders . . . The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb . . . And they sang a new song:**

**“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because You were slain,
and with Your blood You purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom
and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”**

“Ancient of Days” in the hymn is from Daniel chapter 7, where the phrase denotes God, who has existed forever from eternity, and defeats the enemies of His people, the saints. Daniel 7:19-22—**I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast . . . that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left . . . As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.**

This is our God, who sends His Son, our Paladin, into the world to battle Satan and win the battle for us. His crown was made of thorns. His weapon was the cross. His victory is ours and His victory is forever.

Pastor Kerigan

NEW YEAR – NEW BEGINNINGS

God's Peace to you and Blessings for a Joyous Christmas and Prosperous and Healthy New Year!


In January we will be forming a nominating committee to prepare a list of new officers and board members for Bethany. The voters approve this slate of nominees at the May voters' meeting. If you were in church on Sunday, November 16th,



you heard Andrea Vest's Stewardship Witness talk as part of our Consecrated Stewards Program. Most often we think of Stewardship as our financial gifts to God in response to His blessings. However, there are two other parts to Stewardship, Time and Talent. This is what Andrea spoke of, how she has been a steward taking care of things God has entrusted to her to bless Bethany's ministry.

God has given each of us talents: financial acumen, leadership, administration, a singing voice, an ability to pray, a love of working the soil, a handiness to paint or repair, an ability to plan events and programs, and the attributes go on and on. The more people who are involved in Bethany's ministry, the lighter the load will be for everyone. We welcome newcomers to the boards to bring fresh ideas. Prayerfully consider how you can serve.

Katie Benashski, Congregational President

	<p>Christmas Memorials</p> <p>Anyone interested in contributing toward the cost of the Christmas poinsettias is asked to contact Dot Menzel at 677-0283.</p>
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EPIPHANY—SEASON OF LIGHT



“Arise, shine, for your light has come!” So begins the Old Testament reading (Isaiah 60:1-6) for January 4th, The Epiphany of Our Lord. “Epiphany” means “manifestation,” as in the revelation of the Savior to the Gentiles. The old prophet Simeon spoke about that when the infant Jesus was brought to the temple for His circumcision and dedication. Simeon said, in the words that have become our Nunc Dimittis, “Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a **Light to reveal You to the nations** and the glory of Your people Israel.”

As we celebrate Epiphany this year, January 5th, you’re invited to bring a candle to place in the chancel during the worship services. You may bring the candle and put it on a table near the lectern. Following the service, you can take it home (or leave it if you wish). Please make sure that it’s a smokeless, unscented candle so as not to affect people with allergies or sensitive noses. Thanks!



Consecrated Stewards:

December 7 is “First Giving Sunday,” the day on which you are asked to begin giving to the Lord’s work at the level you pledged on Consecration Sunday. *Your gifts to the work in His Kingdom are blessed.*

Stewardship Note:

The Federal Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 allows an individual over the age of 70-1/2 to make a tax-free gift up to \$100,000 to ministry from an IRA *without increasing taxable income*. Gifts must be received or postmarked by Dec. 31.

THE FUTURE OF BETHANY

You have heard about Mission and Vision, have seen the Values depiction on the Worship Folder cover, read about committees looking into our Declining Attendance, Budget contributions, etc. I'm sure you wonder if there is an answer, a punch line, an "ah-hah." There isn't; at least not today. Planning for the future is a process, and as such it continues.

In October, the Parish Planning Council met with a New England District consultant on the topic of Church Revitalization. We were very excited about what he had to say. All of you will have an opportunity to hear more about this when the consultant, Pastor Bill Meyer, joins us on January 25th and shares his message during the worship service. If we pursue this Revitalization process, it is essential that the congregation makes that decision, not just the Parish Planning Council. Please watch for more information as the date gets closer.



Pastor Krieger and I also attended a District Workshop where we had the opportunity to be exposed to a Church Strategic Planning methodology and process. That is something else we will be discussing and determining whether these two processes work in tandem or whether we should pursue one or the other.

Katie Benashski, Congregational President



The Quiet City Brass Quintet will once again bring a festive air to our 7 PM Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols. Contributions to help pay for their service can be made in honor or memory of someone special. Please contact the church office with the specific information.

“ONE THING”

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2:1-4



These verses are genuinely the inspiration for the sign that hangs above the doors at the back of the church which reads “***The Worship is over, Let the Service begin!***” As an individual, I reflect upon these words almost daily. How have I helped others today? Have I affected someone else's life

positively today?

It is very easy to get caught up in the rush and constant non-stop pace of everyday life. Work deadlines, appointments, schedules, phone messages, e-mails, the list goes on and on. It is very easy to get done at the end of the day and say, “No more. I need some time to myself.” That is certainly not an unselfish attitude—to take a momentary break. However, just think about how less stressful and how pleasant life would be if each person did just one thing to positively affect the life of someone else on a daily basis. If we each put someone else's interests before our own wants. We have all heard the phrase, “We are living in a ‘me’ society.” What is in it for me? I was first. As Christians, we should be putting the focus back on the “we” society. For “we” are all God's children.

It really is not difficult. Holding a door open for someone. Grabbing a neighbor's garbage can and bringing it back from the curb if you know they will not be getting home until late. Shoveling more than just your driveway after a particularly nasty winter storm. Fixing a meal for someone who is sick or has just been

laid off from work. Giving an elderly neighbor a ride to a doctor's appointment. Listening and giving comfort to someone who is going through tough times. All of these are examples of one thing each one of us can do to help others daily.

With the onset of troubling times in our society and the prospect for even more uncertainty within the next several months, it certainly is within God's plan that all of us use our gifts, talents, and abilities to just do "one thing" every day to positively affect the life of someone else.

Paul DiPietro, for the
Board of Lay Ministry

CELEBRATING LSS SUNDAY



January 4, 2009 will be LSS (Lutheran Social Services of New England) Sunday. *In response to Christ's love, Lutheran Social Services of New England serves and cares for people in need.*

LSSNE touches the lives of 4,000 people each day in the following major service areas: Services for New Americans, Children and Family Services, Disability Services, Services for Older Adults, LSS Smart Care in Home Services, Good News Garage, and Lutheran Disaster Response— New England.

Guest preacher and leader of adult Bible class discussion will be Pastor Robert Schipul. Pastor Schipul is a member of the LSS advancement and congregation relations team as a director of church relations. In this role, he works with Lutheran congregations in Southern New England to increase awareness of LSS ministries and clients. Pastor Schipul also serves on the board of directors of LSSNE, having recently retired from parish ministry at Christ Lutheran Church (LCMS), in Scituate, MA.

To learn more about Lutheran Social Services of New England, visit www.lssne.org

DORCAS LADIES WRAP UP 25 YEARS OF ANNUAL FAIRS

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FAIR ! On Saturday, October 25, 2008 the Dorcas ladies, assisted by their faithful helpers, organized and carried out another successful Bethany Fair. Our sincere and grateful appreciation to all our helpers, and to Bethany members who brought items for the bakery, jewelry, and collectible tables, and to those who came and supported the Fair.

Our only meeting in December will be on Tuesday, December 9th for our Annual Christmas Party. In January we will start meeting on every Tuesday morning once again.

At our first meeting of the new year, we will have election of officers, collect dues for the year, and we will also have the pleasure of deciding on gifts to the various charitable organizations that we have been able to support over the years, thanks to our profits from the Fair. It will also be a time to discuss and redefine our goals.

Word has spread that The Dorcas Society will no longer be able to plan, organize and carry out all the details and work involved in having a Fair each fall. THAT IS TRUE.

It was in 1983 that the first Fair was held by The Dorcas Society. Dedicated and loyal ladies have remarkably carried on the tradition for TWENTY-FIVE YEARS!! It is no longer feasible for us to continue. Unless other leadership within Bethany arises, there will NOT BE A FAIR NEXT YEAR. It is with sadness that we have to let this happen.

God Bless Bethany and those we reach during this wonderful Holy season as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.



CELEBRATING THE SEASONS



December brings us glad tidings of great joy as we begin our celebration of Jesus' birth. We are centering our entire month around the wonders of the season and how many miracles God provides for us each day. Our last days of school before our Christmas Break will find us having a Happy Birthday Party for Baby Jesus.

Be sure to check out our adorable Christmas Trees with homemade ornaments on our classroom doors. What a great way to end a wonderful December month!

January will bring cold and snow, but hopefully only in the classroom. We look forward to the days we can get in our snowsuits and play on the playground, though!

If you ever want to see something amazing you should be in the classroom when we are trying to get all our three and four year olds dressed at the same time for winter outdoor play! January will also bring New Year's songs, mitten matches, graphing mittens, snow storms and shaving cream! Our 50th day of school will be celebrated in the 4/5 year old class with a Nifty Fifty Party. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be honored by the making of Peace Doves and the children will share their New Year's resolutions on decorated horns.

Nursery School would like to thank Amy Litke for coming in to read to our class on her day off from New Britain Public Library.

Just a little brag time: we had a surprise inspection by the Licensing Department with the State of Connecticut and our local health inspector was here, too! There are 135 areas of concern that they look at and we had zero violations! So we were given a 100% rating! We are so proud! Our new license has arrived and we received one good for four years.



ATTENDANCE & COMMUNION FIGURES

Date		Communed		Communed	Total	Total
					Attend.	Com- muned
	8:15		11:00			
9/21	119	101	72	60	191	161
9/28	80	72	95	77	175	149
10/5	105	95	62	56	167	151
10/12	80	73	79	61	159	134
10/19	116	109	57	58	173	167
10/26	73	61	91	82	164	143
11/2	140	112	65	56	205	168
11/9	104	89	63	73	167	162
	10:00 AM					
11/16	190	164			190	164

ADDRESS CHANGES

Heidi Sonstroem

Hilda Taft

Tillie Cook

Elaine Tessmann

Terri Martens

Marion Cassey

Norma Stoll

Tony & Jennifer Hopkins

Marge Brause

