

The Messenger of Hope



The Newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church

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Christmas 2 to Epiphany 4



January 2010

WORDS OF HOPE

Submitted by Pastor Dave Lefsrud

Maybe you are just like me and are suddenly realizing, "Our new pastor is coming next month, but we're not ready!" It might have something to do with Advent and Christmas preparations and being too busy and it might have to do with getting organized for the New Year or it might be because I'm just starting to think about annual meetings and Lent, etc. I know that some of us were thinking that we might be having our new pastor in time for our fall program and now it is already winter...but where did the time fly?? I'm not sure that I'm ready to leave as your interim pastor...I still felt there was some work for me to help get everyone ready for Pastor Terry and his family.

I think we still have a couple of questions to ask ourselves to help us determine if we really are ready. The first one, on a parish level, is to ask if we have successfully completed the tasks of the interim ministry? And secondly, on an individual level, to ask if members have let go of their feelings and attitudes about the previous pastor...and are people ready to welcome and make a commitment to our new pastor? I think readiness on both the parish and individual levels are essential before the parish can move on.

Remember our five (5) tasks for interim ministry which I outlined last May...Task 1) Coming to Terms with History; 2) Discovering a New Identity; 3) Leadership Changes during an Interim, 4) Renewing Denominational Linkages and 5) Commitment to New Directions in Ministry. We've done some good work on all five of these tasks...some better than others, but we're moving in the right direction. Are we a different parish than we were eight (8) months ago....definitely! And with God's help, we will continue to be a different parish in the future.

God certainly must love change and transitions, for it is pumped into the very heart of creation. Change, transition and transformation parallel with death, three days and resurrection. They also parallel the exodus from Egypt, the wilderness experience and the entrance into the Promised Land. This is our story...Good Friday, Saturday and Easter Sunday... change, transition and transformation!

Are we individually ready to move on...to welcome...and commit ourselves to new leadership? My sense is definitely Yes! No pastor really does things the same way as another...and you have had me and Marv, Gary and Beth to show you a variety of pastoral styles these past several months. None of us are like Curtis or some of your other former pastors, but each of us and Pastor Terry are unique individuals whom God has gifted and this congregation has called. If you have been able to "put up" with me, I know you are flexible and open enough to welcome another new personality.

Changes will continue to happen...and those changes will hopefully be embraced....and I pray that we will strive to be more unified; grow in our understanding and commitment for our ministries; continue to develop as clear a vision, mission and identity as possible...and remember to pray for each other.

It is time to say good bye to the old and welcome the new. What inspires and strengthens us for this task is the knowledge that as the people of God, we all seek to find and do the ministry to which God is calling us. That calling deserves our prayers, our commitments to work together, to complete this interim process and welcome the Richardson's with enthusiasm and love. I hope that we can celebrate what this journey has accomplished at the end of this interim time and celebrate the congregation's readiness for a new beginning.

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The end of the interim is at hand...and I am excited with and for you all. A new mission has been discerned and is starting to grow...and it's time to boldly move forward.

Go in peace and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!
Pastor Dave

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Submitted by Greg Vosper

2009 has been a real eye opener for me. It has been obvious over the years that a great number of people do a great number of things in our congregation, but until one gets really involved in organization, one doesn't realize how many and how much. As the AGM to AGM year comes to an end, I find serving the congregation a matter of finding the proper channel to go through more important than just bulldozing ahead, trying to get things done. This year we have been blessed by a great council serving with me to the full extent of their commitment, as well as a great Call committee, Altar Guild, Office volunteers, Social Committee, and many others. These people truly amaze me as well as the committees that they have under them doing the "grunt" work. Several wonderful members and former members have gone ahead of us to their reward and will be missed. We have new people coming in, part time and full time. God is good, all the time. We have been blessed with Pastor Lefsrud serving as Interim and Pastors Beth, Gary and Marvin as supply. The diversity has been good for us. This year we are scheduling the AGM for February 21st, with an alternate date of February 28th should a snowstorm prevent holding it on the 21st. While this is unlikely, it is a tradition started last year, one which does not take God providing good weather for granted, as it must be held by the end of February.

This year we have six members of council remaining for 2010, as Emily, Kim, and myself are all finished our first term. Second term requires a second nomination. All active members of the congregation are eligible, active clergy usually exempted by preference. According to Hope's constitution, we are allowed a maximum fifteen council members, a third of which finish their term each year. As this would be the optimum number to share the load and make being on council less of a task and more of a joy, we would like to increase the number to fifteen. Council has elected to use the Ecclesiastical method of electing council members, which means we vote by closed ballot, the first ballot being a nomination ballot. Any one member's name appearing on the first

ballot is then nominated and voted upon on the second ballot and any of those receiving more than 50% of the votes are declared elected after accepting notification. Successive votes are conducted until the required number is elected. This may take slightly more time, but if done with joy and acceptance in our hearts, shouldn't be overly lengthy. Don't be shocked if your name comes up, it means people have confidence in you and will support you. Just going over members in my own mind, on the spur of the moment, I easily come up with twenty three individuals to fill these nine seats, none being spouses of others. Those newly elected, beyond the three filling empty seats, will have their term length arranged at the first council meeting after the AGM. Anyone new on council isn't expected to know all the ins and outs, the rest of us will help you get along. Please take the time to make up a full list of those you would like caring for your interests well before the AGM so that your vote will not be wasted as we get to short listing. Laura Buechler, Gillian Ames, Kathy Karr, Francis Hastings, Darlene Emery, Wendy van Oldenborgh are the present council members for 2010.

Up to date, December 13th, our contributions have been rather short of the projected amount for 2009, but so have our expenses, having an interim pastor and supply rather than a full time Pastor. Also, we have had only two Sunday services since June, rather than three, which seem to accommodate more members' time schedules. The financial reports are available on the website at the bottom of the minutes of the last council meeting. [Click here for financial statement.](#)

May we grow in Faith and Outreach in 2010.

LOAVES & FISHES THANK YOU

Dear Hope Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous donation. It takes many people with big hearts to sustain our ministry of caring and sharing. You are part of a dedicated group who bring what they can to making a difference for those in need in Nanaimo. We will be good stewards of your donation and because you cared, someone else will learn that they are not alone.

Sincerely,
Tony Davis
President

WORSHIP REPORT DECEMBER 2009

Submitted by Carolyn Iles

* We continue to work with Pastor Dave, Gary Schenk, Marvin Svingen, and Beth Paton to ensure Worship runs as smoothly as possible.

* The purchase of a prayer bowl is underway.

* Peggy and Dick McManus are preparing the next batch of Communion Wine.

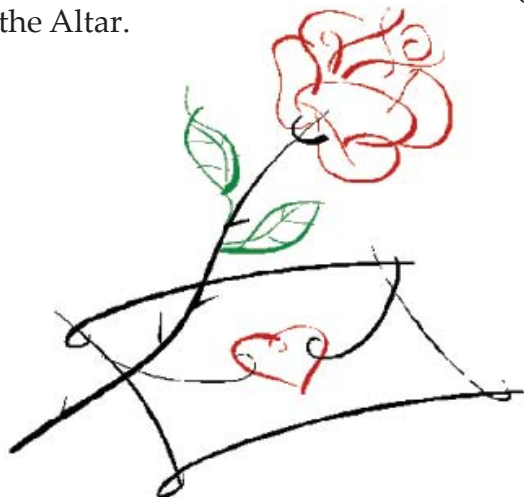
* Worship Assistants are organized for December 20th and 24th.

Future Considerations:

In the new year the Worship Committee will be reconsidering assigning worship assistant roles to people, rather than asking them to sign up. We will work with the Membership Committee that is interested in ensuring Greeters are doing what needs to be done. Uncertain if we should move to this process in February, or wait for the new pastor's advice.

In the past, the role of Usher was looked after by the Council. During the last few years that practice has fallen off. It may well be time to think about Council members once again assuming that role. With 12 council members, each member took responsibility for one month, either attending to the duties, making certain the offering was deposited, and assisting where ever needed, or finding someone to do so (for both services). Thanks to Gerry Owen, Kathy Karr, Peggy Lake and Greg Vosper for serving as an usher when Carolyn and Kim Iles are out of town.

Our thanks to the Altar Guild for their ongoing care of the Altar.



LENNIKOV UPDATE & APPEAL FOR HELP

Email from Pastor Richard Hergesheimer

This update is a long time in coming -- mostly because we have been working on something that we expect will benefit Mikhail. . .and it took longer than expected to put everything in place.

First, Mikhail has been living in sanctuary here at First Lutheran for just over 6 months now. As you can imagine, his spirits are good most of the time and not so good some of the time. Being confined to a building, being separated from life with your family, not being able to go out for a walk on lovely days or head over to a coffee bar for conversation with friends -- all of those realities and more take their toll on him and his family.

Complicating things for the whole family is that the government has not yet granted Irina and Dmitri Permanent Residency Status. True, they were granted that status in principle -- and the process to confirm that status permanently usually takes 6-8 months -- but it is now almost nine months and there is no indication that the Minister of Immigration will finalize their status. As a result, father, mother and son remain in a kind of "limbo" -- with Dmitri still having to pay International Student fees at college and Irina still being unable to plan for a future in Canada.

And yet, despite these challenges, Mikhail is remarkably patient, helpful, hopeful and adaptable even while he is compelled to remain living in our balcony for another three months until our flooded (and hopefully-soon-renovated) basement is once more habitable. Our hope is that he will be able to move back to his larger but still not-sumptuous quarters by early March.

In addition, I suspect that those virtues he demonstrates received a welcome shot in the arm by our congregation's decision to retain a new lawyer to represent him in an upcoming legal challenge. Ms. Naomi Minwalla, a crackerjack refugee and immigration lawyer (who succeeded a few years ago in securing the release and eventual Permanent Residency Status for an Iranian man who had taken sanctuary in a Vancouver Anglican church) is now Mikhail's attorney of record.

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On Sunday, November 8, we held a special congregational meeting to discuss and approve our church council's recommendation that we retain Naomi. The discussion was candid, thoughtful and supportive, and the vote to approve was overwhelming (58-2). I am certain that the two votes were not cast in opposition to the recommendation but rather expressed concerns over where the funds needed to pay the legal bills will come from.

You see, while being careful to make no guarantees concerning the eventual outcome of the legal challenge, Naomi is hopeful about the final result. She believes that Mikhail has sufficient grounds based on a "Humanitarian and Compassionate" appeal. She is so committed to this case that she is billing us at less than half her normal hourly fee. On the other hand, the number of hours she estimates that preparing the case will take runs into the hundreds -- which means that our congregation has committed itself to coming up with at least \$25,000 before next summer. (We have already put down \$10,000 as a retainer "in trust").

And that, as anyone can clearly see coming, is the second reason for this email:

The case itself will take months and months to put together and will take every bit of Naomi's relentless efforts and formidable skills to succeed. Furthermore, as noted immediately above, it will take money--lots of it. And since Mikhail has no real way of earning money (having no legal status in Canada, he can't be employed or paid), we (the congregation) have stepped up to advocate for him and pay the shot for him.

We are not a wealthy parish by any means. About 1/4 of our community are refugees or recent immigrants; another 1/4 are members of what is inadequately termed "the working poor"; another goodly chunk are seniors living on fixed incomes; and the remainder are people who are stretching themselves in so many ways to lend their assistance, financial and otherwise, to the support of this congregation and its various ministries. . .and then, on top of that, to the financial needs set before us by our decision to retain a lawyer.

I am proud of this congregation's courage,

commitment and compassion, and I know that many of you, not from this parish, feel the same way. Indeed, your emails and letters of congratulations (and the donations, large and small, regular and occasional that came with those kind words) have meant and do mean a great deal to us. People like you and the encouragement you offer enable us to remain firm in our decision "to do the right thing" and grant Mikhail's request for sanctuary.

But now we need you and your endorsement of our action to show itself in a very tangible way. Any and all contributions/donations from \$100 to \$1000 will be gratefully received and will, I guarantee it, be earmarked for Mikhail's legal fund. They will not go to the cost of renovating the basement or reshingling our roof.

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide tax receipts for any donations, so please be aware that your donation will and must be considered a gift -- a gift given freely and without expectation of reward. . .other than the confidence and good feeling which comes from knowing that you are an important part of something which makes and will make a significant difference in a man's life. . .and a family's wellbeing. So, please think about giving such a Christmas gift to Mikhail by sending a cheque, money order or bank draft to "First Lutheran Church" and, if you wish and are able, please earmark it "Lennikov Legal Fund". Our address is: 5745 Wales Street, Vancouver, BC, V5R 3N3. (At present, we are not able to process donations via VISA or MASTERCARD but we are looking at ways of doing so in the future).

I am well aware that this is the time of the year when everyone and her dog is asking for your support. . .and this old dog is no exception. So if you can find it in your heart and your bank account to send a gift that would be wonderful. And, by the way, don't be shy about making it a substantial one. Or even, if you are so inclined, you are welcome to pay the whole bill. . .and you will receive our heartfelt gratitude for your generosity. Sorry, though! We can't promise you a place in heaven as a reward, but we might be willing to put your photo in the entryway. We can be bought, you know!).

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Finally, please feel free to forward this update and appeal to anyone you know who is interested in and supportive of Mikhail's desire to remain in Canada with his family. The more folks know about this, the greater the opportunity provided to raise awareness and funds.

I will continue to keep you posted as news unfolds. In the meantime, let us keep the faith and stay strong in hope.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you,

Pastor Richard Hergesheimer (Hergy)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note, that if you enjoy the coffee in the narthex, it is funded by the donation box beside the coffee maker. No Donations, no Coffee. Some generous members have been supplying same as well as milk although they do not partake, but it may run out, if there are no donations.

Greg Vosper

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

We would like to continue using Fair Trade Coffee from CLWR. Please consider a small donation in the coffee jar on Sunday mornings.

Thank you,
Katje Reinhardt



TWO WOLVES

One evening an old Cree told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all.

"One is Evil - It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

"The other is Good - It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cree simply replied, "The one you feed."

