

THE MESSENGER OF HOPE



The Newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church

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June 2005



WORDS OF HOPE

by Pastor Curtis Aguirre

My two favourite months of the year are December and June. I like December because it is dark and cold and we gather together in the warm, toasty coziness of the indoors to celebrate Christmas, the light breaking into the darkness. I like June because it is light and warm and we head outside into the brilliant outdoors to celebrate on our own the glorious creation of God.

Of course December also has its drawbacks. In the darkness and cold of December, we can become depressed. The excitement and expectations of Christmas can leave us feeling lonely and cut off. The great indoor social time can become claustrophobic and oppressive. By contrast I have a hard time finding anything negative to say about June. The light and growing warmth evoke good feelings, contentment, and a sense of ease. As well, the winding down of programs at the church for the summer season give me a sense of being less 'boxed in' in my calendar, more flexible.

It is interesting to me that we have no major celebrations in the Church Calendar for this time of year. The two biggies, Christmas and Easter, fall between the end of fall and the beginning of spring. If you look at the calendar that we get from the national office of the ELCIC to guide our altar Guild through the seasons of the Church Year, you'll see that all of the colour changing, and therefore all of the special celebrations, fall in one half of the year -- the darker and colder half -- and in the other half of the year we are in 'ordinary time' (when the paraments in the church are green).

It may just be a coincidence, or there may be some wisdom here. Traditionally, of course, people would have been doing most of their farming work between planting in the spring and harvest in the fall. It would have been distracting to have too many festivals then. After the harvest, people would have devoted themselves more to the interior tasks of spinning, weaving, mending, and fixing, which all lend themselves to socializing and storytelling. The darkness and cold, which from pagan

(cont. pg.2)

EXPLORING OUTREACH

by Gillian Ames

Opening Up The Resource Experienced And Carried Harmoniously from our spiritual nurturing into our everyday lives.

OR.....



One Unique Touch Resulting Eventually And Certainly in Hopefulness

Have I caught your eye yet? I would like to gather stories of personal outreach as your life touches your community, to present them in the Messenger each month. We are God's hands and feet to reach out to others with His love. Let's share those stories and encourage each other.

If you have a short story or if you know of someone whom you feel would be open to an "interview", please contact me at 245-5046 or gillian36@shaw.ca Give it some thought, you will be surprised to see how much we do interact in God's love.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND HIV/AIDS IN INDIA

(excerpted from the 'Healing and Hope' e-newsletter of the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal (GHDA))

Dr. Sheila Shyamprasad is the project coordinator for the AIDS Desk of the National Lutheran Health and Medical Board in India. She has conducted over 500 workshops on AIDS awareness and prevention, and coordinated and managed the HIV/AIDS Care Centre in Chennai (Madras). In April, Dr. Shyamprasad visited National Office. What follows is a part of her devotion at our morning chapel time that day.

times evoked a festive response, perhaps to compensate or console, seem to have had the same influence on the Christian calendar. At any rate, in the darkness and cold, we may well need to bring light into the darkness, while in June and the summer months, there's plenty of natural warmth and light to keep our spirits up.

May we all have a great season of warmth and light!/

(Lutheran - cont. from pg. 1)

At the gate lay a poor man named Lazarus covered with sores who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. Luke 16:21

Dogs don't share our values. They are more democratic; they are not afraid to make friends with people who are stigmatized and rejected. Lazarus' wounds are the visible signs of his religious and social impurity. It is impossible to think of a greater form of marginalization. The Gospel tells us nothing about his religious beliefs. We don't know if he was ready to obey the commandments or to follow Jewish moral teaching which surely would have been difficult for him in his life on the streets. Certainly Lazarus would have good reason to doubt God's natural compassion for the poor, the rejected and the marginalized.

But in the next life his situation changes. God's messengers carry Lazarus off to be with Abraham. It's worth remembering that angels are God's messengers and that nowadays we have many messengers of the Gospel who are also called to invite in those who have been excluded.

In the HIV/AIDS crisis we meet vulnerable groups of people who understandably have many doubts as to the nature of God. And there are also many messengers who by what they say and do cast doubt on God's just and inclusive nature as it is revealed to us in this model of the Kingdom. But those who are truly God's messengers invite people to a new feast not in the hereafter but in the here and now - given to us as a model for action, of values and communion.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man is not an invitation to resignation, to think in terms of the hereafter when everything will be changed, while still having to carry our cross in the world. We don't have to wait for God to resolve injustices in the hereafter. This parable is not a promise that will be fulfilled sometime in the future. It is a sign that is to be heeded in the present. It is addressed to the rich man's brothers, to all of us who live in the midst of plenty, with little awareness of the injustices and oppression that surrounds us.

We don't need a miracle to change this world of injustice and exclusion. We need to allow the angels (God's messengers) to change us. We need our church to be changed so that it can confront the dynamics of wealth of the large international pharmaceutical companies who think of protecting only their patent rights in the face of so many men and women like Lazarus who are unable to protect their own rights to life and health. The Gospel demands that we make visible the presence of so many like Lazarus who are at the gates of our society; it demands that we heed the pain and suffering of people who are living with HIV/AIDS; it demands that we seek justice for each one of them.

[For more information about the HIV/AIDS program of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI): <http://www.uelci-india.org/> Choose UELCI Programmes/HIV/AIDS. Also see: <http://aidsdeskelci.com/home.html> and <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>]

THERE'S A WEDDING AND YOU'RE INVITED

You and your family are invited to a celebration and blessing of the marriage of

Deborah van der Goes & Marvin Svingen

on June 24, 2005 at St. Paul's Anglican Church,
100 Chapel St., Nanaimo.

The service begins at 4:00 p.m.

It will be followed by a

Family Potluck Wedding Feast and Dance
(please bring a festive family dish or drink with recipe for our collection; to help keep this a family event, there will be no liquor licence)

at Cedar Community Hall, 2388 Cedar Rd.
beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Gifts, please, through Canadian Lutheran World Relief and the Anglican 'Primate's World Relief and Development Fund' to development projects in Africa (yet to be named). Envelopes will be provided.

RSVP to Deborah 250-722-7122 or
deborahvdg@shaw.ca

or to Marvin 250-248-0576 or
marvinsvingen@shaw.ca

CHARITY OF THE MONTH FOR JUNE 2005

This month we will be supporting the work of Haven House. Haven House provides emergency shelter for abused women and their children. The organization also provides support services to help their clients make the transition out of the cycle of abuse.

If you would like to support the work of Haven House, please indicate so by marking an amount on the 'Charity of the Month' line of your envelopes.

Hope Lutheran Church Financial Report – January 1, 2005 – April 30, 2005

As part of a continued effort to keep the members of the congregation better informed on financial matters, the Financial Committee has decided to implement a procedure whereby the current financial status is reported three times a year to the congregation. These reports will appear in the June Messenger (covering the first four months of the year, and always including Easter), the October Messenger (covering the middle four months of the year, and always including the summer months), and the AGM (covering the entire year). In this fashion, if there are timely concerns, the congregation will be kept informed. Should any member of the congregation desire any non-personal financial information at any time of the year, they are, of course, free to contact me at any time.

Attached is the income statement for the first four months of this year. Some points to note:

- 1) The total offerings have exceeded total expenditures by about \$2,800. However, this amount arises from the offerings for the Ingria Mission, which are currently being held in trust until distributed later this year.
- 2) Current offerings (not including the specially designated offerings) are about \$5,200 below that required by the budget approved at the February, 2005 AGM.
- 3) Budgeted expenditures to date are running about \$1,100 below budget.
- 4) Current offerings to date are (within \$40) identical to last year.

Since this year's budget is also about the same as last year's budget, this does not necessarily indicate a need for concern at

RED WILLOW COFFEE HOUSE CHAT

submitted by Verna Conway

There was a grand total of ten different performers at the Fri the 13th Coffee House in May. 35 to 40 people attended. Thanks to all who donated their time, talent and treats. Proceeds went to the Charity of the Month and Hope Lutheran. The next Coffee House evening will be on Fri. June 10th @ 7:30 pm featuring Joan Wallace & friends. - All performers are welcome to an open microphone and stage - Guest Speakers are also invited to share and witness to Social Justice Issues. Benefit will be The 7-10 Club. Ms I. Gagnon to say a few words re: 7-10 club.

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

There is a huge program going on to put pressure on governments world wide to do something about the poverty that afflicts so much of the world today. In July the G8 countries (including Canada) will meet at Gleneagles in Scotland to discuss global initiatives. You can help give them some direction by going to the website www.makepovertyhistory.ca where you can send a message to the PM and our local MPs about world poverty. The program includes the wearing of a white bracelet with "make poverty history" inscribed on it. These will be available shortly through Hope. You can make a difference.

Charlie Fox

(Treasurer - report)

this point. We will have a better feeling for this in the next report in October, which will show the effect the usual decrease in summer time attendance has on the financial picture. However, I do wish to remind everyone to keep the church in mind during the summer – Hope's financial obligations do not go away just because we might.

Arnold Gill

Treasurer – Hope Lutheran Church
May 30, 2005

FROM THE CHAIR

Jan Nilsson

Christian Principles

I spoke with someone this week that said he was raised as a catholic, served as an altar boy and regularly attended church in his formative years. He in turn had brought up his own children in the same faith but now no longer attends church himself. He assured me that he still lives by the Christian principles he was taught as a youth but is now quite critical of organized religion. He then asked me you are Christian aren't you? I confirmed that I am and then he started to complain about how the Jews, among other things, were behind the recent attempt by our school board to remove the name Christmas from the school's Christmas pageant.

On other occasions he has also shared with me that the holocaust was a hoax and nowhere near the 6 million Jews history claims to have been killed were killed. He claims that the Jews themselves fabricated the number of six million for their own benefit. I disagree with his claim but should I dispute his claim that he still lives by Christian principles? However his claim and opinions made me think what are the Christian principles? So I did some research on the good old Internet and found this on www.religioustolerance.org.

“Basically the ten commandments have been considered the foundational laws that all Christians are to conform to and most Christians continue to hold them in high regard, even though they have rejected most of the other laws in the Mosaic Code as no longer applicable or binding.

However there is a gap between what the Ten Commandments actually state, and what the public perceives that they say. Most people believe that all of the Commandments govern moral behaviour in society: to not lie, steal, commit adultery, etc. In reality, the first four commandments are religious in nature and about the recognition of God, uniquely related to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They could be offensive to the followers of many other religions. Only the last six relate to moral behaviour in society with actual behaviour towards other humans and is common to almost all religious systems and are seen in many religious and secular law codes.

Some feel that everyone should follow all of the Ten Commandments, whether they be Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, etc. They push for the Commandments to be posted in schools, court houses, etc. where people will get the impression that the governments and school boards promote Judeo-Christianity.

Others feel that posting the commandments can generate religious conflict, and make some of the public feel like second-class citizens. Some feminists, civil libertarians and others find portions of the Ten Commandments repulsive. They favour restricting the commandments to religious and other private property. “

It would be easy being right if we all had the same opinions, but fortunate enough we live in a part of the world where we can have our own opinion and not be persecuted for it. Do all that claim to live by Christian principles actually do it, I don't think so but that doesn't mean I can be the judge that rejects that claim. What I can do however is to be responsible for my own behaviour and follow Christ's commandment to Love my neighbour as myself and when we all try to stick with this principle the whole world and our own part of the world would be much better for it.

Have a great summer. - Jan

The deadline for the June Messenger is Friday, June 24. Please send your submissions to Norma in the office via email at [hopelutheran@nanaimo.ark.com](mailto:hopolutheran@nanaimo.ark.com) or phone (250) 758-1232.