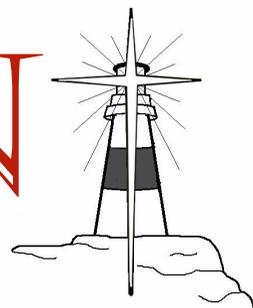


THE BEACON



The LORD is my light and my salvation.

Psalm 27

Volume 1, Number 6 — December 18, 2011

Lighthouse Lutheran Church
501 Third Avenue, Freedom, PA 15042
www.lighthouselutheran.org

The Reverend Dennis R. Whalen, Pastor
Morning Worship 9:00 A.M.
Sunday School 10:30 A.M.

Donna Pfeifer has been busy planning a December 18 shopping trip guided by her and our youth group. This outreach is called the Pfeifer Project and will make it possible for several children in our area to share more fully in the spirit of the Christmas season. Donations are gratefully being accepted by her on behalf of these young ones.

The members of Lighthouse Lutheran are eagerly looking forward to the upcoming Christmas Eve candlelight service. Worship will begin at 11:00 P.M. Holy Communion will be celebrated, and the service will include vocal and instrumental numbers by members of the congregation.

On Wednesday evenings, from 7:00 to 8:30 P.M., Janet McClintick is leading a group Bible study on the parables of Jesus. The course will run for six sessions and is being held in the church's fellowship area. All are welcome to attend.

On the first Sunday of each month, worshippers can have their blood pressure checked by our parish registered nurses, Bert Amsler and Kurt DeHaven. Be sure to read Kurt's article on flu immunization in this issue of *The Beacon*, the first in his "The Health Nook" series.

Pastor Whalen's Wish List, though shrinking, still has a number of items that warrant "checking it twice": A standing sanctuary light for \$775 or a used one for \$500; a Holy Communion set, including a bowl costing \$595, a chalice for \$595, a crystal flagon for \$95, crystal cruets for \$95; a digital projector for \$500.

Lighthouse Lutheran's first congregational meeting was held October 30. The congregation's constitution was approved at this meeting, as was the acceptance of the 2012 ministry proposal and the church's official logo, designed by member Sarah Insull. You can see Sarah's beautiful work at the top right corner of this page. A luncheon provided by the Fellowship Committee followed.

During November, items were collected at the front of the sanctuary for donation to the Unionville Food Pantry. Clothing, especially socks and underwear, are currently being collected for the Unionville Clothes Closet.

Lighthouse Lutheran's first Hanging of the Greens service was held November 27. Wreaths were hung above the side windows and a manger scene was placed near the pulpit. A large, lighted Christmas tree stands at the right front of the sanctuary. The Advent wreath was generously donated by Kurt and Carol DeHaven. After the service, several members of the congregation met in the fellowship area to make additional decorations—candle holders for the window sills and tree ornaments. A covered-dish luncheon planned by the Fellowship Committee followed. On December 4th, worshippers were greeted on entering the sanctuary by a very large wreath hanging above the front window behind the altar, for which location they have the bravery of Tom Kuny to thank.

Christmas boxes containing treats and other useful items have been sent to our five college students: Travis Whalen, Penn State University, son of Dan and Deborah Whalen; Taylor Whalen, Community College of Beaver County, daughter of Dan and Deborah Whalen; Megan Foster, Clarion University, daughter of Brian and Lorie Foster; Jackie Smith, University of Southern California at Hayward, daughter of Janet McClin-tick; Sarah Insull, Kent State University, daughter of Rich and Karen Insull.

December 11 was Bring a Friend to Church Sunday. Sixty-three people attended that day, including several visitors. A reception for our guests followed, at which time each visitor was given a poinsettia and a bag containing a Lighthouse Lutheran mug, pen, and information about our congregation, put together by Lorrie Kuhn.

We have been blessed at worship by the musical talents of several of our young people. Katarina's piano solo, "Holy, Holy, Holy," served as the offertory at a recent service. At another service, Lexi accompanied on trumpet the congregational singing of "Amazing Grace." During Advent, Katarina and Amanda on flute, Julian on congas, and Jocelyn on triangle have accompanied the singing of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Saturday, December 17 was the day of our Christmas caroling. Several members enjoyed sharing the holiday spirit from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. with shoppers at the East Rochester Plaza.

Did you know that cell phone numbers have been released to telemarketers and that you will receive sales calls on your cell phone? To prevent being charged for these calls, call the National Do Not Call List at 888-382-1222 from your cell phone. Doing this will block that cell phone's number for five years. You must call from the cell phone you want to have blocked.



Pastor Whalen's Message

As a father of three daughters, I sometimes (okay, often) embarrass my girls in front of their friends. Sometimes, I greet their friends while wearing shorts, black socks, work boots, and a cowboy hat. Other times, I serenade them with a beautiful song sung in my best imitation falsetto voice. Boys are much more difficult to embarrass, so I usually do not even try, but the girls are humiliated when their dad tries to fit into a conversation using the latest street lingo (incorrectly, I might add). When I compare stories with other dads, I find that this tends to be a universal custom that may cross not only generational boundaries, but international ones as well. Interestingly, we are *trying* to be embarrassing. If our daughters were not ashamed, we would classify the effort as a failed attempt. Yet, all in all, this is a father's attempt at silliness and fun. I love my daughters, and if they were truly ashamed of me I would be the one that is mortified. I could not stand knowing that my daughters refrained from mentioning my name or talking about our relationship because they were ashamed of me.

Our Father in Heaven is a much better father than I will ever be. He is always there for us and seeks a relationship with us so that we will know Him. As such, He sent His Son, His only Son, whom He loves, to bear witness to His love for us. Christ came so that the Father's children might know this love. The author of Hebrews writes, "God is not ashamed to be called their [those who died in faith] God" (11:16) and "Jesus is not ashamed to call them [those adopted children] brothers" (2:11). However, when God demonstrates this love for His children and they turn away ashamed of Him, there is a serious break in the relationship. When His children refrain from mentioning His name or talking about their relationship with Him, there is a critical, life-threatening, break occurring.

Christmas is a very interesting time of the year to ask this question of ourselves: "Are we ashamed of God?" Webster's Dictionary defines the word "ashamed" as "fear of shame, ridicule, or disapproval." While we are out shopping, do we wish people "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas"? Are we celebrating the "Season of Reason" or the "Reason for the Season"? Do we sing only carols such as



"Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer" or do we also include those that testify to our faith, such as "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" and "The First Noel"? In the book of Romans, Paul writes "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes . . ." (1:16). Can we stand with Paul and say, "I am not ashamed"? I think so. I think we already do to some extent, but this Christmas I will personally state my profession of faith while I shop and while I am visiting with friends and, yes, even while at work. I love the Father and His only Son and the Holy Spirit, and I am not ashamed to mention His name. I am also not ashamed to discuss my relationship with Him, for it is a great relationship. This is my faith and, quite frankly, the birth of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God in the flesh, is the only reason that December 25th is a holiday. So, I ask you, as Children of God, will you also share with your neighbors the stories of the Lord, especially the birth of the Christ Child, this Christmas season? As Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:8 ". . . do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord." So be it. Amen.

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Our mission is to pray for those who are ill, or just going through rough times. Once we have been given a request, since there are so many who would like to help out who do not knit or crochet, yarn is handed off to have volunteers roll the skeins into balls. While they are rolling, they lift the recipient in prayer. The balls of yarn are handed off to others to crochet or knit. The needle work is done in quiet conversation with the Lord, asking His blessings of peace, healing, and mercy on the recipient. One ball of yarn may be left to pass on to a third group to create the tassels for the shawl. They, too, continue with prayers. During the prayers of intercession during worship, the recipient is lifted in prayer by the congregation. The shawl is delivered with a note that includes a Bible passage with words of encouragement.

Prayer is an amazing gift of grace from God. As a community of believers we have comfort in knowing that Christ is ever present when we pray. He is listening.

Cindy Morris



THE HEALTH NOOK

Once again, it is that time of the year, the dreaded winter season. Unfortunately, along with winter comes the Flu season. The flu vaccine is one of the most effective ways to prevent this potentially deadly disease.

Influenza is caused by the influenza virus, which primarily infects the respiratory tract. It is a contagious disease that spreads from person to person when the infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus is sent into the air and other people inhale it. If you do not have immunity, you may develop the disease.

After the symptoms start, beginning one day before you start to feel sick, a person can spread the flu and can pass the flu virus to others for another three to seven days. If you become infected with the virus, the symptoms start in one to four days, ranging from no symptoms at all to deadly symptoms requiring hospitalization.

The classic flu symptoms are: Sudden onset of body aches, fever, headache, fatigue, along with respiratory symptoms such as dry cough, sore throat, and runny nose; and occasionally gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Complications of the flu include: pneumonia, dehydration, sinusitis, ear infection, and worsening of any pre-existing medical conditions such as heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Most people who get influenza will recover in one to two weeks.

Influenza's not bacterial, therefore antibiotics will not help. Rest, the drinking plenty of fluids, and taking pain and fever medications are all advised, as you wait for the illness to run its duration.

There are new antiviral medications on the market today that have been found to shorten the duration of the disease, but only if started in a timely fashion.

The only true way to become immune is to be vaccinated! Healthcare providers highly recommend that everyone receive the flu vaccination. The vaccine has minimal side effect and it is found to be 70–90% effective in preventing the flu. Most importantly, those persons within the high risk population should receive the vaccination because it can be a life-saver. For the 2011/2012 season the CDC has recommended the vaccination be received annually by everyone 6 months old and older.

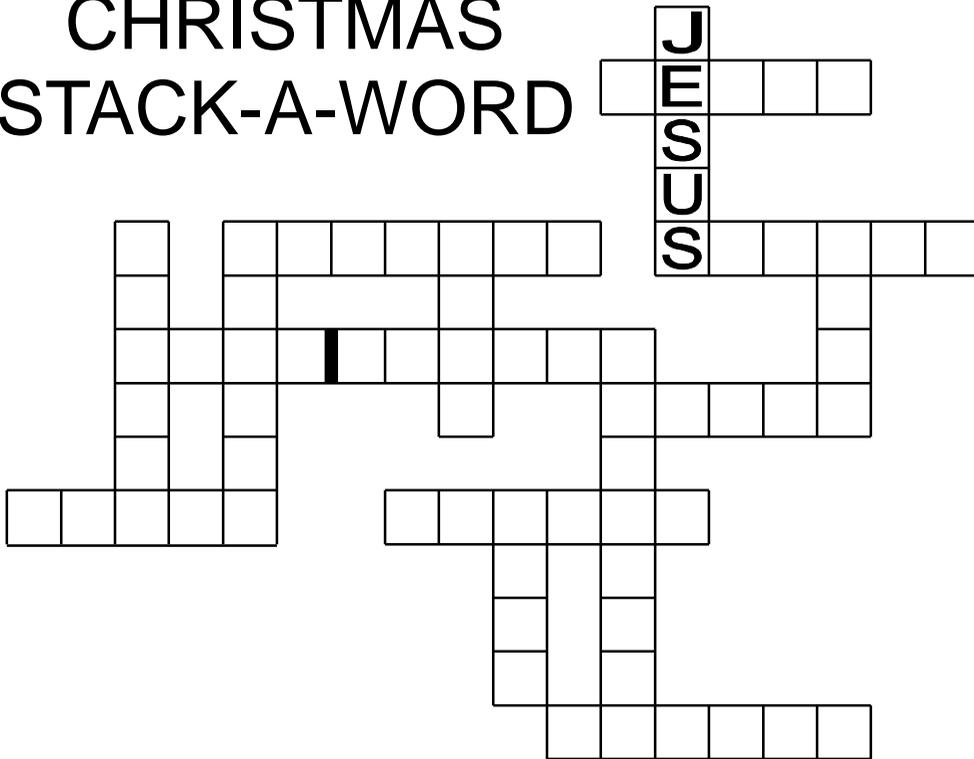
"PLEASE BE WISE. GET IMMUNIZED!"

"My dear friend, I pray that everything my go well with you and that you may be in good health – as I know you are well in Spirit." John 3:2

Any questions, anytime, please feel free to consult one of your Parish Registered Nurses, Bert Amsler or Kurt DeHaven.

Kurt DeHaven

CHRISTMAS STACK-A-WORD



Use these words about Christmas
to finish the puzzle.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| NOEL | SHEPHERD | PEACE |
| MANGER | STAR | HOLLY |
| NATIVITY | BABY | ADVENT |
| JESUS | STABLE | WREATH |
| MARY | CAROLS | WISE MEN |
| JOSEPH | | MYRRH |

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together
Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Psalms 98: 4-9

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the “Father of English Hymnody” was born into a religiously nonconformist culture in which congregational singing was restricted to paraphrases of the Psalms. These paraphrases were often rendered in meter and rhyme which were outrageously unnatural to the English language. While still in his teens, he was challenged, after complaining about the low quality of the hymns (“Give us something better, young man”), to write a rewording of Revelation 5:6-12.

Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst His Father’s throne;
Prepare new honors for His name
And songs before unknown. *etc.*

He continued writing his poetic versions of Scripture passages, and in 1719 brought out his *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. “Joy to the World” was first published in that work. It is a paraphrase of the last six verses of Psalm 98. Though only the first stanza is related to the birth of Jesus, it holds a place in the first rank of English Christmas carols. Isaac Watts wrote about 700 hymns, including the masterpieces, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” and “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.” This nonconformist pastor was also the author of about 60 philosophical and theological works.

For more than a century, “Joy to the World” was sung to numerous tunes which fit its poetic structure. Then, in 1839, the New England music educator, Lowell Mason, wove together two musical phrases from George Frederick Handel’s “Messiah” (“Lift up Your Heads” and “Comfort Ye”) creating the joyful song which has ever since been associated with Isaac Watts’s words. Mason referred to the tune as “after Handel” and named it “Antioch” for the ancient Syrian city that was the point of departure for Paul’s first two missionary journeys and where Jesus’ followers were first called Christians.

O HOLY NIG

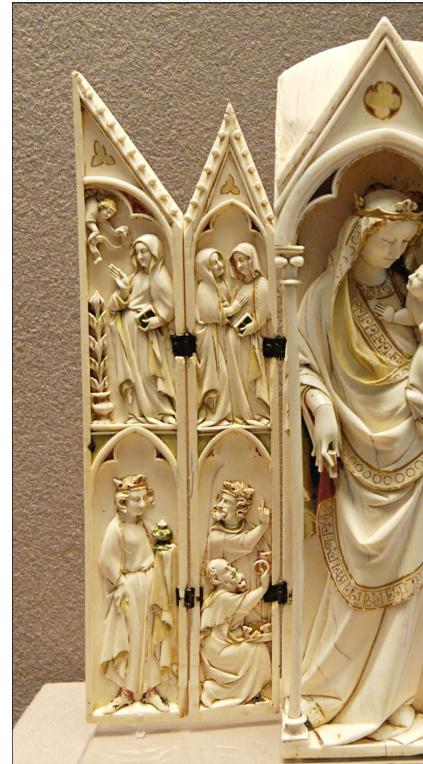


"La Santa Notte" (Holy Night) painted by Carlo Maratta (1625-1713) is in Dresden's *Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister*.

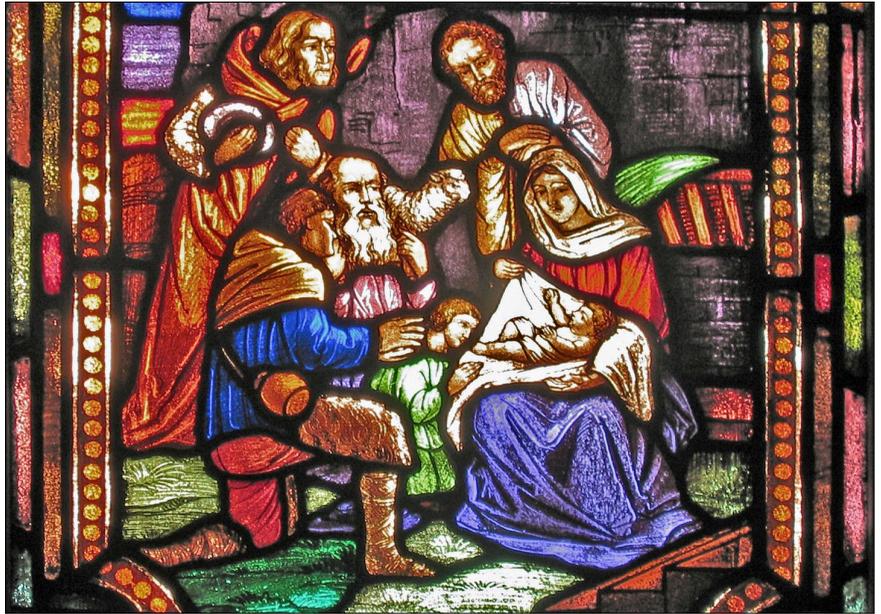
Right: 12th Century Romanesque capital from St. Pierre, Chauvigny, France. Photo—Jochen Janke, German Lang. Wikipedia



Below: 14th Century ivory triptych (French). The small panels show the Annunciation, the Visitation, Joseph holding Jesus while Mary sleeps, the Wise Men, and the Presentation.



HT



Stained-glass window in the historically significant Fifth Avenue Methodist Church, New Brighton, Pa., depicting the adoration of the shepherds.



"Adoration of the Shepherds" by Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656)

WHAT IS EPIPHANY?

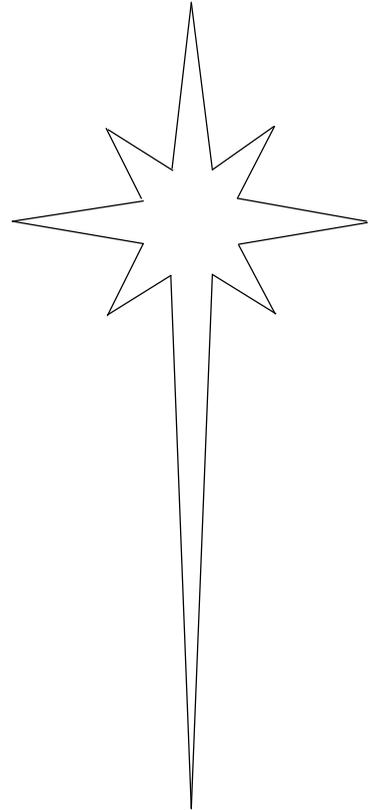
It is the wise men and their story,
Finding promise in God's glory.

It is the star that lights their way,
And shines within our hearts today.

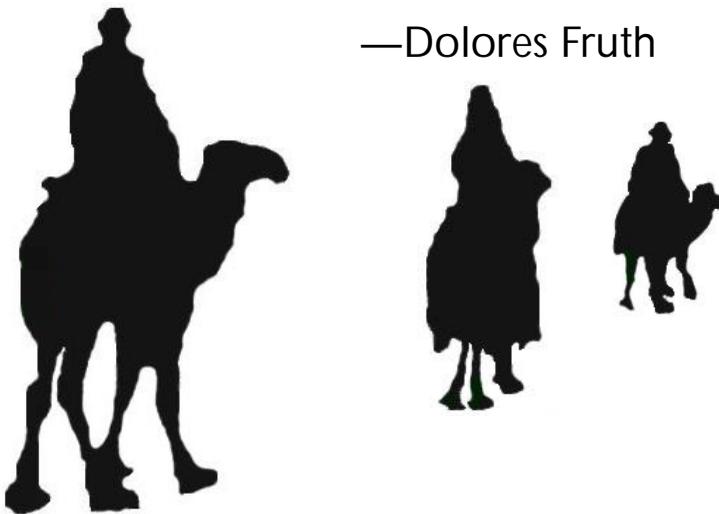
It is our journey once again
To introduce our Christ to men.

It is the gifts we gladly bring
In honor of the Child, our King.

May God's Epiphany shine through
As He gives grace to me and you.

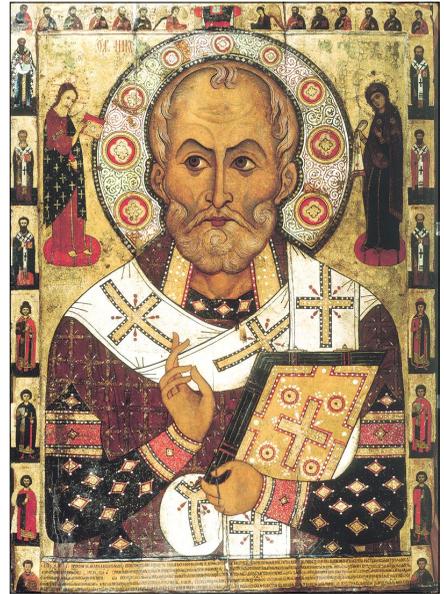


—Dolores Fruth



Saint Nicholas

Yes, Virginia, there is a St. Nicholas—not the Santa Claus of whom Francis Pharcellus Church wrote in his famous editorial, but a real man who was born sometime between A.D. 260 and 280 of wealthy Christian parents in the (then) Greek port city of Patara. His early life was during the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian, during whose reign the last great persecution of Christians took place. After the death of his parents in an epidemic, he was raised by his uncle, also Nicholas, who was the bishop of Patara. Nicholas dedicated his life to God and used his entire inheritance in service to his fellow men. He had a reputation for secret gift-giving, making him the ideal model for the modern Santa Claus. When still a young man and not yet a priest, he was elected to the position of bishop of Myra. His name is on the most reliable lists of those attending the first ecumenical council, the Council of Nicaea, in A.D. 325. He died in Myra on December 6, 343.



Russian icon (1294) from Lipnya Church of St. Nicholas in Novgorod



St. Nicholas is venerated by Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians and is honored as well in some branches of the Protestant Church, including the Lutheran Church. His feast day is December 6th. He is the patron saint of, among others, children, sailors, fishermen, merchants, the falsely accused, and penitent thieves.

In the Turkish city of Demre—the ancient Myra—a large bronze sculpture of the saint by Gregory Pototsky was mounted in the town square in 2000. In 2005, this was replaced by a brightly-colored Bakelite statue of a Western-style Santa. This statue was, in turn, replaced in 2008 by a fiberglass Santa Claus dressed in more-or-less modern clothing and with Turkish features.

Church Council Meeting Highlights

October 24, 2011, 7:30 P.M.

as taken from meeting minutes.

Pastor Dennis Whalen, Norman Amsler, Dee Eppihimer, Tom Kuny, Cindy Morris, and Carol Nicoletti were present.

Following devotions, the minutes of the September 19, 2011 meeting were accepted as presented.

Dee Eppihimer presented the September financial reports. It was moved by Pastor Whalen, seconded by Tom Kuny, and carried that the "Financial Report Sheet" and an "Accounts Balance Summary Sheet" be submitted to Council (eliminating the Chart of Accounts and Monthly Receipt Summary). The treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

Pastor Whalen presented his report for 9-20-2011 through 10-23-2011, a copy of which is attached to the Council minutes posted on the bulletin board. New member—Dee Sheets.

The Evangelism Committee met on October 4, 2011.

The Fellowship Committee met on October 4, 2011.

Concerning the distribution of the 2011 benevolence funds, it was moved by Carol Nicoletti, seconded by Norm Amsler, and carried to use half of the international funds to support, through the International Theological Education Ministries (ITEM), Pastor Tom Smith's missionary work in Croatia, the use of the remainder to be determined at the next Council meeting.

It was moved by Tom Kuny, seconded by Pastor Whalen, and carried to use some of the national benevolence funds to support the Texas Fire Victims Fund through Martin Luther Lutheran Church.

It was moved by Tom Kuny, seconded by Norm Amsler, and carried to adopt the proposed Lighthouse Lutheran Mission and Vision Statements.

Mission Statement: To reflect the love of Jesus Christ so that others may be led to Him.

Vision Statement: We, the members of Lighthouse Lutheran Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, faithful prayer, and worship, strive to be disciples of Jesus Christ, spreading God's word and love throughout our congregation, community, nation, and world. We will let His light shine through our words and actions.

The Christmas Eve service will be held at 11 P.M. There will be no worship service on Christmas Day.

Pastor Whalen, Norm Amsler, Janet McClintick, and Mel Roush are the members of the Nominating Committee for the 2012-2013 Church Council.

Church Council Meeting Highlights

November 21, 2011, 7:30 P.M.

as taken from meeting minutes.

Pastor Dennis Whalen, Norman Amsler, Dee Eppihimer, Tom Kuny, Cindy Morris, and Carol Nicoletti were present.

Following devotions, the minutes of the October 24, 2011 Council meeting and the minutes of the October 30, 2011 Congregational meeting were accepted as presented.

Dee Eppihimer presented the October financial reports, which will be filed for audit.

Pastor Whalen presented his report for 10-24-2011 through 11-21-2011, a copy of which is attached to the Council minutes posted on the bulletin board.

The Evangelism Committee met on November 1, 2011.

The Fellowship Committee met on November 1, 2011.

Concerning the distribution of the 2011 benevolence funds, the following recommendations will be made by Council at December's Congregational meeting:

International Charities and Missions

- 50% to International Theological Education Ministries (ITEM) in support of Pastor Tom and Ana Smith's mission to Croatia
- 25% to Child Outreach International, whose missionaries work directly with LCMC congregations in Nicaragua and with Lutheran missions on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border
- 25% to the Slindes, missionaries to Nicaragua

(Moved by Tom Kuny, seconded by Norm Amsler, carried)

National Charities and Missions

- 33% to Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ There are currently three full-time staff positions within the headquarters and dozens of pastors who donate their time to to the denomination.
- 33% to Faith Comes by Hearing, the world's largest audio Bible ministry with New Testament recordings in over 600 languages spoken by more than 5 billion people
- 34% to Mission Congregation

(Moved by Norm Amsler, seconded by Cindy Morris, carried)

Local Charities and Missions

- 25% to the Women's Shelter, Beaver, Pa. We will send Bibles for distribution in addition to our donation.
- 25% to Churches Are Serving Together, (CAST) a non-profit interfaith organization seeking to bring the churches of Beaver County together in serving the needs of fami-

lies and individuals in crisis

- 25% to the Unionville Food Pantry, Nancy Liston's ministry to local people in need of food, helping many students of the Freedom School District
- 25% to Christians United in Beaver County (CUBC), supporting many ministries in Beaver County, including the Beaver County Jail Chaplain, Beaver County Juvenile Detention Chaplain, Friendship Ridge Chaplain, Behavior Health Clinic Chaplain, Raccoon State Park Chaplain, and the Chaplain for the Beaver County Commissioners' meetings

(moved by Pastor Whalen seconded by Cindy Morris, carried)

It was moved by Cindy Morris, seconded by Norm Amsler, and carried to provide the following Local Individuals in Need benevolence:

There are three families struggling to make ends meet (one each in Ambridge, Leetsdale, and Freedom). Each family will be given a Study Bible, a Children's Bible and an LLC gift bag. This will leave approximately \$360 to be used for groceries and to help pay bills.

Cindy Morris received a thank-you for the first prayer shawl.

MICHELE WEIDNER'S CHILI

3 pounds ground meat
2 cans tomato soup
1 large can diced tomatoes
1 large can tomato sauce
2 cans kidney beans
1 jar Heinz chili sauce
dash of sugar

Brown the ground meat in skillet.
Put all other ingredients in slow cooker.
Add browned ground meat.
Cook for 1 hour in slow cooker.



MUSINGS

The essential message of the Gospel is made acutely visual in the simple portrayal of the Holy Family surrounded by the animals, shepherds, and wise men from the East, as the angels of Heaven proclaim the birth of Emmanuel. It's all there. God has entered history in the person of His Son to redeem mankind from sin; to end by His perfect Sacrifice the separation from Himself that sin has caused. *Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.* The image is so powerful and compelling that the secularists might well attempt to prevent any public display of manger scenes at Christmastime.

They go further. It has not escaped them that the whole world calculates the passage of time based on the miraculous birth of our Savior. Dates which most designate *anno domini* they prefer to call the Common Era, so that A.D. 2011 becomes, in their parlance, 2011 C.E. Dates which most are accustomed to call B.C.—before Christ, they like to call B.C.E.—before the Common Era. Is Jesus so offensive to them? In any case, their efforts are in vain. By this renaming, they have indeed eliminated the words “Lord” and “Christ,” but the fact remains that the birth of Christ defines history. “Common Era” it truly is, and it is so because of our Lord’s nativity.

Christians cannot contemplate the Manger without contemplating the Cross. Joyful as the birth of Jesus is, as much as it fills our hearts with singing, we know that Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost, and that means His death in our place. But, praise God, because of the Manger, the Resurrection also is a fact.

Satan knew the jig was up for him that first Christmas. He’s been raging over it for two thousand years. He rages still, but the victory is ours through Christ Jesus.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Mel Roush



Over one hundred years have passed since the postcard reproduced here (actual size) was received by New Brighton's Mary Cain in 1907. In the early years of the 20th century, postcard collecting was very much in vogue, and Miss Cain's collection numbers in the hundreds.

It was in 1907 that the United States government followed the lead of Great Britain, France, and Germany in allowing the mailing of postcards with a divided back for a message and the address, leaving the front entirely free for pictures, photos, etc. Postcards became an extremely popular form of communication. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1908, when the population of America was just under 90 million, 677,777,798 penny postcards were mailed.