



THE EPISTLE

Volume 8 Issue 12

St Paul Lutheran Church

December 2009

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Thursday of Pentecost 24

November 19, 2009

The End of Time

Sisters and Brother in Christ,

The season of Advent is a curious beast. While we are hurrying and rushing to prepare for our Christmas celebrations, we gather on Sundays and hear strange and harsh words, On the first Sunday in Advent, we hear Jesus say, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory." (Luke 21:25-27) Other readings throughout Advent mimic these cries and speak of penitence and God's coming in terms that sound more like they belong in a cinematic vision of a science fiction apocalypse. The friction that results between our cultural setting and our church setting has led many to bemoan, "Why don't we sing Christmas carols? Why all of this talk of the end of time?"

Ah, the end of time. That is truly what this season is about. The end of time... but not mainly the end as in the destruction of time. Rather, we need to hear that God has been and is yet at work in Jesus to bring about the end, that is, the goal, of the created order. When we hear end, we need to understand that God is at work not just redeeming us fallen human beings, but God has an end in mind for us and all creation. The season of Advent lifts up that God's future work, begun in Christ Jesus has very real implications for us in the present. One theologian has written,

What may seem to be an anomaly is a very important theological point: The beginning of the liturgical year takes our thinking to the very end of things. For "end" means not only the "end of time" but the central purpose or goal of creation.... History is headed somewhere by direction (though not dictation) from God. It is necessary that the liturgical year begin with this focus on a central holy, intention; for otherwise the story of Jesus, which is about to be rehearsed from conception and birth to death and resurrection, may seem less than what it is: the deliberate fulfilling of divine purpose, worked out through historical process.¹

God has a grand and glorious vision in place for creation. So grand and glorious, in fact, that he empties himself and enters into this creation. The redemption of the world, already accomplished in Christ's death and resurrection, await their glorious end when we and the world around us is transformed into what God desires. Let us wait and watch for that glorious day.

Grace and Peace,

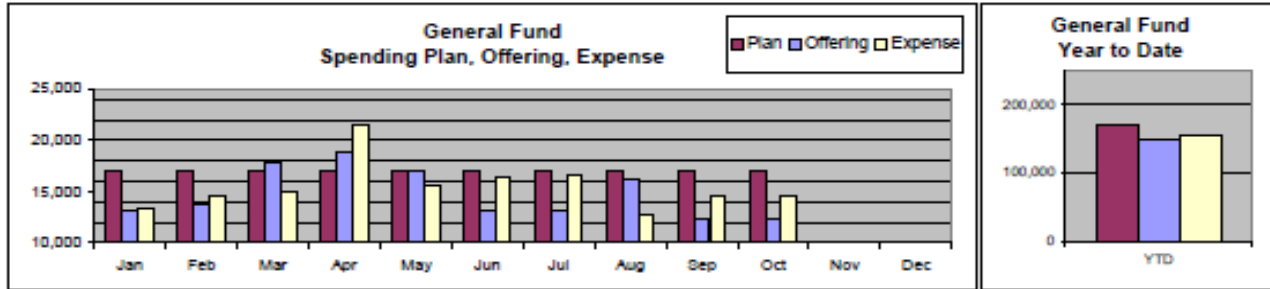
Pastor Brian

¹Stookey, Laurence Hull, *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*, Abingdon Press, 1996, p.121

Treasurer's Report

St Paul Lutheran Church Statement of Revenue and Expense with Spending Plan

October 2009	October				Year to Date			Year to Date	
	General Fund	Spending Plan	+/- of Plan Reo'd-Spent	% of Plan Reo'd-Spent	General Fund to Date	Total Plan to Date	% of Plan Reo'd-Spent	Restricted Fund	Total Funds to Date
Support and Revenue									
Contributions	13,791	17,113	(3,322)	81%	148,328	171,129	87%	148,328	148,328
Designated/Restricted								22,132	22,132
Total Assets	13,791	17,113	(3,322)	81%	148,328	171,129	87%	22,132	170,480
Expenses									
Designated/Restricted		0				0		30,228	30,228
Congregational Council	39	0			923	0		0	0
Benevolences	0	2,600	(2,600)	0%	18,200	26,700	68%	0	18,200
Church Mortgage	568	580	(12)	0%	5,668	5,800	98%	0	5,668
Committee - Christian Education	70	137	(68)	51%	2,491	3,625	69%	0	2,491
Committee - Fellowship	101	79	21	127%	844	1,097	77%	0	844
Committee - Staff Support	0	0	0	0%	0	30	0%	0	0
Committee - Outreach	106	146	(40)	73%	1,168	2,018	58%	0	1,168
Committee - Property	109	167	(57)	65%	1,738	1,667	104%	0	1,738
Committee - Resource	0	0	0	0%	0	600	0%	0	0
Committee - Stewardship	0	0	0	0%	0	100	0%	0	0
Committee - Worship & Music	285	308	(23)	93%	2,350	3,815	62%	0	2,350
Insurance	888	301	587	295%	3,949	3,511	112%	0	3,949
Building Operation	1,818	1,841	(23)	99%	19,407	19,338	100%	0	19,407
Office Operation	405	384	21	105%	4,149	3,838	108%	0	4,149
Parish Communications	200	185	15	108%	1,690	1,900	89%	0	1,690
Payroll	9,471	9,102	369	104%	91,252	91,025	100%	0	91,252
Total Expenses	14,068	16,830	(1,772)	89%	163,829	186,086	89%	30,228	183,136
Excess of Support and Revenue Over Expenses	(267)	1,283	(1,660)		(5,502)	6,065		(8,096)	(12,675)



HELP WANTED: We are still looking for a Worship Assistant Coordinator. This person schedules worship assistants and sends out postcards as reminders. If you are interested you can talk with Sally Leonard or Pastor Brian. Thanks!

WELCA NEWS: Word is out that the December meeting of the Women of the Church might be different from our usual. Come join us on Wednesday, December 9th, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the church lounge. Bring a favorite Christmas memory if you can. See you there!!



The new flower chart for 2010 is now posted in the narthex. If you would like to put flowers on the altar for any occasion, celebration of a special event, in memory of someone special, or just to the Glory of God, please choose your desired date. If you have any questions, please call the church office.



“HANGING OF THE GREENS”

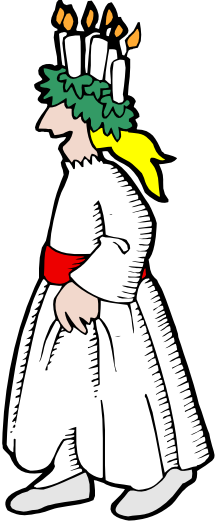
**December 6th
4:00pm**

**Come join the fun & fellowship
as we decorate the sanctuary
for Christmas**

**PLEASE BRING
A FINGER FOOD TO SHARE
DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED**

Saint Lucia

December 13



One of the traditions of Swedish Lutherans is the commemoration of Saint Lucia. It begins in the darkest hours of the morning of December 13 between the hours of 2 and 4 a.m. A young woman wearing a white gown, a red sash and a crown of lingonberry twigs and blazing candles emerges out of the darkness carrying a tray of rich saffron buns and steaming coffee to wake the family. Throughout Sweden the feast day of Lucia, or Lucy, is celebrated as a festival of lights. The Lucia Queen, or *Lussibruden* (Lucy Bride) leads the processions. Lucia, according to the tradition, was a young woman born of noble parentage in Sicily and brought up as a Christian in the late second and early third century. Lucia and her mother Eutychia, who suffered from a hemorrhage, made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Agatha and offered prayers to God. When her mother was cured, Lucia vowed to give the share of her own fortune to serve the poor and devote herself to God's service.

This vow did not sit well with the young man to whom Lucia had been unwillingly betrothed. The young man denounced her as a Christian to the governor. Sadly the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian were in full force then. The authorities tried to break her spirit, but ultimately resorted to martyring Lucia by the sword.

How does a Sicilian saint's story take hold in Scandinavia? At one time Sweden was in the grip of a terrible famine and at the height of winter when things were their worst a ship sailed across Lake Vannern with a beautiful young woman dressed all in white at its helm. She was so radiant that there was a glow of light about her head. It was St. Lucia with a shipload of food.

At St. Paul, we have established a discretionary fund named the Santa Lucia fund that is used to continue the service to the poor and hungry. You may always contribute to the Santa Lucia fund, whose monies are distributed to those who are in need. No money is ever put into the hands of those seeking assistance. Groceries or meals are bought for people directly. Help with utilities or rents is done in partnership with aid organizations in Morgantown.

This December, please consider giving an additional contribution to help us continue the work among the poor and needy here in Morgantown

News from Council

The St. Paul Congregational Council met Sunday, November 12th and would like to share the following highlights with you:

- Received another check from the Kroger program—total received so far from the program is \$614.25.
- Special Thank You to everyone that helped with Suzanne Roh's funeral.
- There will be a Conference-wide meeting with the Bishop on December 1, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Mark's to discuss events in the wake of the Churchwide Assembly. Everyone is invited to attend. Any questions, please see Pastor Bennett.
- Donations by Parking Committee: \$1,000 to Community Lutheran Partners; \$1,200 to Santa Lucia Fund; \$1,300 to Glades Run.

Sunday School News



The theme of our Christmas program this year is 'Savior of the Nations, Come.' The program is a service of lessons and carols which will be led by the children and which will replace the usual Sunday service on Dec. 20th (we will still have Communion).

Following the service we will have a light meal of finger foods, after which the Sunday School will go caroling at the homes of our homebound members.

Members of the congregation are asked to bring finger foods for the meal. You may choose to bring cookies and sweets, or items like fruit, cheese and crackers, etc. We are also in need of clothing from other countries for the children to wear during the service. So if you have something from your native or ancestral land or people, even a hat, it would be wonderful if you could lend it to us for the day. Children's sizes and small adult sizes are needed.

FROM THE PIECEMAKERS: Good news, we were able to send 20 more quilts to Lutheran World Relief, thanks to Linda Ross dropping them off at the warehouse on her way to Baltimore. We can not stress enough what a big help that is to us since shipping costs are so high. We are very busy sewing quilts tops right now, since we used up all that JoAnn had made for us. We recently welcomed 2 more workers to our little group and that is a real blessing. In the year of 2008, Lutheran World Relief has send 455,798 quilts to 23 countries. India received 67,500 and Thailand 60,000. So you can imagine how many people have been working very hard making these quilts. We believe our mission at St. Paul has really been blessed. Thank you every one for pitching in to make it possible. We hope every one of you may have a blessed and peaceful Christmas season...Merry Christmas from the Piecemakers!



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS **SERVICES AND EVENTS**

ADVENT VESPERS AT ST. PAULS: WEDNESDAYS,
DEC. 2, 9, & 16 AT 7:00 PM

DECEMBER 13TH: HANGING OF THE GREENS 4:00 PM

DECEMBER 24TH: FAMILY SERVICE 6:30 PM
FESTIVAL SERVICE 11:00 PM

DECEMBER 25TH: HOLY COMMUNION 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 27TH: HOLY COMMUNION
SERVICE 10:00 AM

JANUARY 6TH: EPIPHANY SERVICE 7:00 PM



THE GREEN CORNER

Gift Giving Time — Thanks-Giving Time

The Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change convenes to consider green-house gas solutions and emission mitigation. This is not the first time that world leaders addressed the problem of global warming. The Kyoto Protocol (which the U.S. did not sign in 1992) tried to implement caps on various countries establishing a cap-and-trade penalty/reward system on industrial pollution but proved difficult to implement. Several states could not meet established goals, and there was no enforcement or oversight method established for monitoring on a global scale. The political climate today, however, is vastly different in Washington, and perhaps we'll have more success this time, as the world looks to the U.S. for leadership.

Our politicians, however, will be more enthusiastic with support of their consistency, and as we all know, the power of responsible industrial, commercial industries will respond only to the bottom line. As the youth decided not to buy sneakers from an apartheid South Africa, change of policy quickly occurred. Big change!

The religious community also has a powerful voice to effect change on climate policy with leadership intent on establishing spiritual values over God's creation. The faith community participated in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Montreal (Dec/05), and expressed religious concern about our warming planet. Their spiritual declaration was twofold—to present political leaders with deliberations and to present religious leaders to encourage local congregations efforts. The World Council of Churches has also sponsored conferences to educate poor people about climate change issues as a 'moral imperative'—siding with suffering people, protecting the environment, addressing the fundamental question of global fairness. Indeed, the 'conversation' of leading evangelicals has risen quickly since 2000 as the potential human toll becomes more evident. A virtual 'who's who' of evangelical leaders signed a document 'Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action' in which the poor emerge as justification. (The conservative National Assoc. of Evangelical from 51 denominations did not, however, sign.) The WV Interfaith Global Climate Change of which our Synod is represented, has been weakened by the powerful coal lobby in Charleston. In fact, the state meetings gradually reduced to the North Central District and St. Paul's. Steve Woodruff conducts monthly meetings. Pennsylvania, another coal producing state, had also struggled to enact legislation for alternative energy sources.

The greatest challenge to climate reform is the global economic policy of consumerism. The world's religions have warned for thousands of years about the excessive attachment to the material goods and wealth and are the only institutions to present some reason for human existence other than the accumulation of stuff. An organization, The Alternatives for Simple Living, is known for its resources to help Christian recapture the essence of Christmas by celebrating the holiday more simply and meaningfully. National Coordinator Gerald Iverson, however, observed that houses of worship are part of the consumer system because they depend on the wealth of member donations. Furthermore, consumerism is an addiction extremely difficult to break. 'Simple living is more than charity. It works for justice. That involves changing systems, including our own life styles.'

Perhaps, the story of St. Francis might be more effective than conferences of doctrinal statements in communicating the truth. His story may inspire us to imagine new ways of living out the gospel of Jesus. Readers interested may want to read, Saint Francis of Assisi by Thomas Celano and Saint Francis, A Model for Human Liberation by Leonardo Boff. The conversion of Francis began with his encounter with the poor leper that set the tone for the rest of his life. We may not experience such conversion as Francis to step from our positions of privilege into greater solidarity with the poor, but we can be called in this Advent season to identify with their suffering and efforts to claim a more human existence. Their sufferings continue the crucifixion and promise of resurrection. How can we alleviate today's lepers so far removed from us? 1. First, by reflecting on how to make Christmas a deeper spiritual rather than a consumer experience. 2. Secondly, by questioning the relationship of industrial wealth to global poverty seriously. 3. Offering your talents to our climate change meetings. Call Steve Woodruff. 4. Pray for the Copenhagen Conference. 5. Give thanks for our Lord's gifts. 'You nourish and sustain us, dear Lord, with Earth's gifts of life. Teach us never to try to dominate your earth, but in humility receive her gifts and care. Help us to heal the painful wounds that we have inflicted on her and on ourselves.'

Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving

The Prayer List for St. Paul

In The Small Catechism, Martin Luther writes: The Second Commandment: You are not to misuse the name of your God. What is this? Answer: We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive using God's name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God.

Following this command to call on God's name in every situation, we list her intercessions to be lifted up in the midst of our congregation's worship.

**Person for whom
we intercede:**

Alana Mears
Vernon Dalton
Rose Dalton
Betty Kelso
Ann Cloonon
Deb Myer
Sone Armstrong
Louise Paulson
Scott Nelson
Skip McCulla
Irene Hellyer
Jim Craig
Wil Gladfelter
Tom Kelso
Dr. Frank Schwing
Lesa Simonsen
Lori Shannon
Barbara Kervaski
Madge Hall
Hall Family
Margaret Dameier
Dameier family
Aaron Sampson

For what we are praying:

Advanced Lyme Disease
Bell's Palsy
Pneumonia
Illness/Surgery
Illness
Lower back surgery
Ear surgery to restore hearing
Post concussion syndrome
Liver problems
Stroke Recovery
Breast cancer surgery
Health problems
Illness
Illness
Melinoma
Hip replacement
Esophageal surgery
Chemotherapy
Died/entered the church at rest
Comfort in midst of grief
Died/entered the church at rest
Comfort in midst of grief
Deployed in Afghanistan (Army)

Names will remain on the list that for one month. At that time they will be removed and it will be necessary for you to re-enter their information in the notebook that is in the narthex. If you become aware of anyone that can be removed prior to that time, please notify the church office.

St. Paul Youth Group Meeting: Sunday Dec. 13th - ***time*** TBA



Activity: Making ornaments for Shut-in baskets

maybe Movie and dinner, also

Watch bulletin and announcements for more info!!

Serving St. Paul In December 2009	VESPER LEADERS			
WED. 2nd 7:00 pm	Beth Dameier			
WED. 9th 7:00 pm	Tamara Riegel			
WED. 16th 7:00 pm	Sally Kirkpatrick			
	LAY ASSISTANT	LECTOR	ACOLYTE/ CRUCIFER	USHER
24th 6:00 pm	Debby Borrelli	Matt Sampson	Ammelin Grosso	MaryLee Cushing Larry Springer
24th 11:00 pm	Debby Borrelli	Steve Woodruff	Luke Price John Borrelli Emily & Ethan Stiles	Bill Graham Earl Melby Dave & Brenda
25thH 10:00 am	Matt Sampson	Geoff Groce		LuAnn Hartley

SERVING ST. PAUL December 2009	LAY ASSISTANTS	LECTORS	ACOLYTE-CRUCIFER	USHERS	NURSERY WORKERS	COUNTERS
6th 10:00 AM	M. Haas	S. Armstrong	K. Smith A Grosso	LA Hartley C. Henry L & L Paulson	K. Custer M L Bennett	S. Price M. Bartlett
13th 10:00 AM	J. Lee	B. Schreiman	AJ Bartlett M. McCulla	D & Custer G & K Kullman	J. Graham Ford-Werntz Family	P. Cushing S. Gabbert
20th 10:00 AM					E. Stiles E. Sampson	D. Borrelli C. Toffle
27th 10:00 AM	S. Woodruff	S. Price	K. Custer E. Custer	K. Powell P. Smith T & F Potter	A Grosso S. Hollar	C. Henry B. Graham

If you are unable to serve, please find your own replacement. Thank you.

December 2009 Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px auto; width: 80%;"> November 09 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 </div>		1 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM Lutheran Identity	2 7:00 PM Vespers Choir Practice	3	4 10:00 AM Piecemakers	5
6 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Service 11:45 AM Confirmation Class 4:00 PM Hanging of the Greens	7	8 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM Lutheran Identity	9 2:00 PM WELCA 7:00 PM Vespers Choir Practice	10 7:00 PM Council Meeting	11 10:00 AM Piecemakers	12
13 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Service Youth Group Meeting	14	15 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM Lutheran Identity	16 7:00 PM Vespers Choir Practice	17	18 10:00 AM Piecemakers	19
20 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Christmas Program 10:00 AM Service 11:45 AM Confirmation Class	21	22	23	24 6:00 PM Family Service 10:30 PM Music Program 11:00 PM Festival Service Christmas Eve	25 10:00 AM Christmas Day Service	26 Circle of Friends
27 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Service Circle of Friends	28 8:00 AM LMM (Shoney's)	29	30	31		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px auto; width: 80%;"> January 10 S M T W T F S 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 </div>

ST PAUL LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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