

The Connection

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Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda

February
2012

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to transform all people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church exists to

Welcome people to faith;

Equip people with a faith that works in real life;

Send people into *service* into a hostile and hurting world in Jesus' name.

GREAT COMMANDMENT

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.... Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39)

GREAT COMMISSION

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

Home Is Where Everyone Belongs

Matthew 2:1-12

Home—home is where your family is and where people are always glad to see you. Your home might be your house or an apartment in a big building. Wherever your home is, it is the place where you belong.

On Christmas Eve our hearts were renewed as we listened again to the Nativity story, vividly cast in our imaginations upon the pastoral Palestinian hillsides near Bethlehem. Smelly shepherds caring for even smellier sheep were trying to bed-down for the night; their daily routine interrupted by an angel with a message and an angelic glee club with a new song to be sung. Those shepherds decided to go into town to see for themselves what was going on. And they discovered a young family from Nazareth, an unmarried couple away from home with a newborn baby, and none of the conveniences even of that time and place.

Those shepherds were not all together clear about what they had seen and heard that night, but their hearts were filled with joy. They seemed to know deep inside that their lives changed that night, that their world was a different place, that something new was taking place right before their eyes.

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FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

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IN AND AROUND CELC

WELCOME TO CELC!

New to Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church? Want to know more about our faith community? Please email the church, clc@heartmindsoul.com, to begin receiving our weekly e-newsletter.



HOLY COMMUNION INFORMATION



The sacrament of Holy Communion is offered at both worship services, every Sunday morning. We offer traditional wine and grape juice.

Two crystal chalices are used; the grape juice is white and the communion wine is dark red. If you would like more information about communion, contact Pastor Jon.

GREET AND TREAT MINISTRY

Thank you to all who serve in our greet and treat ministry, which provides goodies and smiling faces to greet worshippers each Sunday morning! To sign up, contact George Wenchel (george@wenchel.com).

facebook

Find us on facebook:
Christ Lutheran Church

twitter™

Follow us on twitter:
@christbethesda

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

Purchases of Fair Trade coffee provides the means for small farmers to make enough money to support themselves while using the premiums to improve their standard of living.

Here's what's available:

- pillow packets (pre-ground) of Regular (Mind Body Soul) and Decaf (Columbian). Each pillow packet makes one pot (about 64 oz) of coffee (\$2)
- a variety of whole bean and ground regular and decaf coffees (\$8 for 12-oz pkg; \$9 for 16-oz pkg and decaf)



To learn more about this coffee, visit www.equalexchange.com. Proceeds from the coffee will be given to support the ministry of Mi Refugio, the school for impoverished children in Guatemala. Please contact Lisa Bente (carpedm28@verizon.net).

THE TABLE MINISTRY

Why The Table and Neighborhood Life? Neighborhood Life is the optimal place for life change similar to the experiences of the early church where spiritual development and outreach happened right where you live... by building genuine friendships with both CELC and non-CELC neighbors; by growing spiritually as a natural part of your everyday life; by responding to the needs of others in your neighborhood and beyond.

If you would like to participate in a Table group, please contact Sanna Solem (sannasolem@gmail.com), Florence Heacock (flohea@heartmindsoul.com), or Larry Goolsby (goolsbyl@comcast.net).

February

Annual Congregational Meeting

Join us for our
Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 5, 2012

10:15 am in the sanctuary
(between worship services)

We will be approving the 2012 operating budget,
electing council members,
and electing call committee members.

Contact Lisa Stechschuelte, council president, if
you have any questions (lisasteck@gmail.com)

Lent

Join us for worship on
Wednesdays in Lent:

Ash Wednesday

February 22
7:00 pm
Sanctuary



Wednesdays during Lent:

Dinner and Worship: 6:30 pm
Hospitality Room

For something new this year:

Tuesday, February 21: 6:30 pm

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Hospitality Room



You can help the hungry by dining out on Tuesday, February 28!

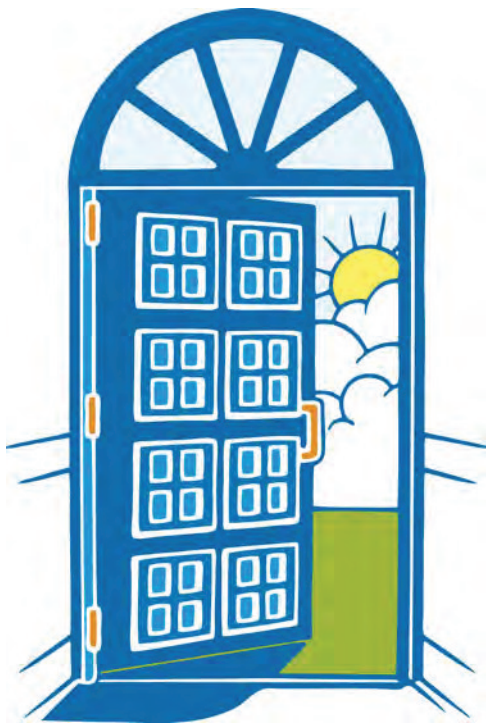
For more than 20 years, Thanksgiving in February has brought restaurants in Montgomery County, MD together with local nonprofit agencies to support hunger relief in our community. One day every February, over 70 restaurants contribute 10%-0% of their sales to this community event. Proceeds from this event go to support 11 Montgomery County agencies that provide emergency food to our hungry neighbors. For more information, see www.thanksgivinginfebruary.org

Home Is Where Everyone Belongs

(continued from page 1)

As this story was unfolding on the slopes of Palestine, another story was developing. The Magi -- wise men we sometimes call them -- came from out east and started asking questions around town. "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? We have followed his rising star and we have come to give him honor."

Who are these guys? Where are they from? How did they get word of all this? And for heaven's sake, what is this business about following a star? When outsiders from a foreign place show up asking questions about things the locals are not sure about themselves, you can imagine what the reaction of the authorities might have been! King Herod was a little shaken up by it all, and he works at getting the Magi to help him locate the child. Indeed, the three strange foreigners find the child and are overwhelmed by what they find; they fall upon their knees in worship and praise and adoration. Like the shepherds on the hillside, they begin to realize that something is changing in their world; a new thing is happening; a new world is being born. In a dream



they receive a warning and escape from King Herod before giving him the information he so desperately desires. And still another angel warns Mary and Joseph to take the baby and escape south to Egypt until Herod is dead and their return home is safe.

It is a wonderful story, full of emotion and intrigue, easy to picture in our mind's eye. It provides the inspiration for art and music, for poetry and song. Few stories told through the centuries are so familiar, so beloved, so rich with emotion. It is the stuff out of which children's nativity pageants are made: shepherds in muslin wraparounds with ropes around their waists. Mary in her blue gown and Joseph looking bewildered by it all; angels in choir robes and aluminum foil halos, and wise men in colored bathrobes with tea cozies on their heads. The tableau unfolds just as it should, and it ends on a glorious note when the Magi fall upon their knees and worship Christ the newborn king. It warms the heart and we feel all warm and satisfied inside.

The story is so familiar, but our Christmas music and children's pageants have so domesticated it that the point the evangelist is making may well be hidden from our eyes. Matthew was telling the story of the birth of Jesus for new Christians, for new followers of the Way. And even in so young a church it seems that their vision was limited. The boundaries of their community were already closing tightly around them. Matthew could see already that the new believing community was too easily settling into the idea that this new life in Christ was for them; they were already getting too comfortable with themselves and too easily willing to put others outside.

Matthew shocks his readers right from the first verse of his gospel by recounting the genealogy of Jesus. He does so in a way that must have confounded those who first read it. A genealogy in those days was traced through the male lineage, but Matthew breaks from tradition and includes four women in his list of the ancestors of Jesus. And they were not just any four women. They were women whose lives bore the

Home Is Where Everyone Belongs

scars of prostitution and incest, of adultery and murder. Matthew is laying the groundwork, even in his seemingly boring list of names of folks long dead, that the new day that is dawning is quite different from anything one might be expecting.

And Matthew keeps up the theme when he introduces the Magi. These men from the East; these are not hometown folks, with hometown values, and hometown upbringing; these odd fellows from some foreign land, these were the kind of folks that the Scriptures warn good religious people to stay away from. The first hearers of Matthew's story of Jesus would not have had such warm, fuzzy feelings when the Magi fell to their knees before the manger-throne of the King of Kings. Quite the opposite! Matthew's readers would have been scandalized by the audacity of three strangers from a foreign land who would dare to show up in their hometown to worship and adore their newborn king. "We can't have this!" would have been their first response, and it was precisely the response that Matthew was hoping for.

Matthew had them right where he wanted them, and now he could begin to unfold the rest of the story of Jesus. He could now remind his readers -- and he continues to remind us -- that the saving word of God, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is not for some, but for all. Not for men only, but also for women. Not for the perfect only, but for those whose lives bear the scars of unmentionable human pain. Not for the hometown crowd only, but for those on the other side of the tracks, the next town over or halfway around the world. Not for those who believe just like we do, but also for those who are struggling to believe anything at all, or those who have lost their faith.

The star comes and rests over the place where the infant Jesus was born. Keep your eyes on it. Gaze at the star. Focus on it. Fix it firmly in your mind. Because in



time you will discover that the points of the star will stretch themselves into the form of a cross, and it will no longer rest over the place of where the child lay, but will come to rest over your life and the world you inhabit.

Some years ago, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York plastered the city with posters of the altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral lavishly decorated for Christmas. It was a warm and inviting sight. The poster's caption was simple: "Come home." No matter where you've been or who you have been with, no matter what you've been up to, or how long you have been away, "Come home."

That is the invitation implicit in the gospel: "Come home." Home is for everybody. Even for wise guys from the east who stumble upon the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings. Home is the place where you belong. Home is the place everyone belongs. Amen.

*Peace,
Pr. Jon*

Small Group Ministries

Small Groups are spiritual communities where people share their thoughts, feelings, struggles, and joys, while applying Biblical principles in their lives. Small Groups grow in trusting relationships, and participants agree what is shared will remain confidential and differences of opinions are respected. Small Groups are spiritual communities where life transformation occurs through the love and Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in relationships with His people.



“Challenging Lifestyles”—A dynamic Sunday morning experience for those wishing to learn, experience the lifestyle of Jesus

Christ in the 21st Century “challenging lifestyles.” A Biblical, prayerful, spiritual, nurturing, and supportive fellowship. Sundays, 10:15 am in The Upper Room. Contact Larry Goolsby (301-946-6479; lgoolsby@aphsa.org)

“THRIVE” for women seeking in-depth Bible study, fellowship, fun, outreach ministries meets September-July, 9:00-10:30 am on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month. Breakfast included.

Contact Sanna Solem (sannalsolem@gmail.com; 301-571-0050)

“Men’s Master Builders” meets for breakfast, Bible study, worship and fellowship at 9:00 am on the first Saturday of the month in the Hospitality Room. Contact Richard Cypinski (240-505-9505; richard@heartmindsoul.com) or Pastor Jon Hundt (pastorjon@heartmindsoul.com)

“Monday Night Group” meets weekly, 7:30-9:00 pm for study, prayer, fellowship in the Hospitality Room. Contact Steve North (steve.celc@gmail.com; 301-871-8161)

“The Table Ministry”—21st Century table experience, around the Table of Christ. Build genuine friendships in and out of CELC, grow spiritually on every day basis, and respond to the needs of others. Three-session series, with meal, in Host Homes. Contact: Florence Heacock (301-452-2491; flohea@heartmindsoul.com)

“PrayerLife Ministry”—meets for prayer, study, discussion, fellowship. PrayerLife outreach includes Taize Prayer Services and prayer study. Contact Florence Heacock (301-452-2491), Larry Goolsby (301-946-6479), or Dave Lambert (301-983-5034)

“Martha Circle,” a Bible study based on material provided by the Women of the ELCA, meets at 10:30 am on the 3rd Tuesday of

each month. Contact Mary Merrick (301-571-7212)

“Rachel Circle,” a Bible study based on material provided by the Women of the ELCA, meets at 7:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Contact Alice Daniel (301-949-4688)

“Women’s Healing Ministry” —A 12-step, Christian recovery ministry based on the Beatitudes that uses eight principles as well as fellowship and God’s healing power to help heal hurts and overcome personal defects and replace them with life’s abundance. Contact Florence Heacock (flohea@heartmindsoul.com; 301-452-2491)



Reasons to Join a Small Group:

- You will understand the Bible better in a small group.
- You will begin to really feel like part of God’s family.
- Prayer will become more meaningful to you.
- You will be able to handle times of crisis, change, and stress better.
- You will have a natural way to share Christ with friends, relatives, and work associates.
- You will develop leadership skills you never knew you had!
- You will deepen your understanding of worship.
- You will have fellowship, laughter, and fun

A Praying Life

When in “prayer” Bible studies, prayer becomes a discussion of ways and times to pray. As you have read in previous Connection prayer articles, there are many ways to pray, and praying can be every moment of every day or any time.

Philippians 4:6 says, “Don’t worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for He has done.” 1 Thessalonians 5:15, instructs, “Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

To help us in our prayer journey, there are many ways to pray—both ancient and relatively contemporary. Following are several additional prayer methods to help you speak and listen to God:

Divine Reading (Lectio Divina): one of the most central and ancient practices of Christian prayer is divine reading. In divine reading, we begin by reading a few verses of



the Bible. We read unhurriedly so we can listen for the message God has for us there.

Ignatian Method: named after Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), a sort of virtual experience of the scripture where you read the scripture and then create in your mind a short file about what you read.

Prayer the Psalms..: Psalms has been called the prayer book of the Bible in both Jewish and Christian traditions. It is a collection of sung prayers that has been used in worship from the time of ancient Israel up to the present.

Icons-Prayer With Eyes Wide Open: many of us were taught to close our eyes when we pray.

Praying with icons is an ancient prayer practice that involves keeping our eyes wide open, taking into our heart what the image visually communicates.

Personalizing Scripture..: the Bible contains prayers and canticles (songs) that give us words to pray and praise. Many, such as the Lord’s Prayer, the Magnificat, and the Canticle of Simeon, have become part of the common prayer of the church liturgy. Yet, any of these may also give voice to our own joys, yearnings, and struggles.

The Examen—Remembering the Day..: In his Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius urged that all be taught the examen, a daily examination of our deepest feelings and desires. He called these feelings our consolations (what connects us with God, others, and ourselves) and desolations (what disconnects us).

Prayer Wall—share your prayer: A wall where you post your prayers, so we can join with you in prayers of thanksgiving, praise, confession, petition, and intercession.

As we enter into the Lenten Season, prayer is a time for quietness and listening to and for God. May one of these prayer methods be an inspiration to you in your Lenten Journey.

Florence D. Heacock
Small Groups Minister

Small Group Ministry Forum

Saturday, March 10
10:30-Noon

Simplicity: A Lenten Path



Lent is the 40 days (excluding Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. Traditionally, it has been a time of fasting, commemorative of Jesus' 40 days of fasting in

the wilderness following his baptism. Lent also recalls the 40 days that Elijah and Moses both spent with God, as well as the 40 years that Israel spent wandering in the desert. Lent prepares the way for the greatest observance of the year, the death and resurrection of Jesus

Lent is the perfect season of the year for solitude and self-reflection. As we spiritually journey into the desert, it is a time to reexamine our boundary lines and get realigned, set in right relationship with God and the world around us. Following is a suggested Lenten path, of simplicity, to travel as the days grow longer and Easter approaches.

Simplicity is not a particularly simple or easy way. Life is very complex and the walk of simplicity is complicated and demanding, but the rewards are a hundred-fold. Rather simplicity is a spiritual discipline that reorients one's life by deliberately organizing it for a purpose. It is spiritual because simplicity deals intimately with the beliefs and views that lend shape and order to our lives. Simplicity is a discipline because we have

to work at it and practice it in order to apply it in our lives. Adhering our life to a focused center reduces the fracturedness of our lives. Our priorities are aligned to the focus of our lives, and the way we live out our simplicity in terms of our time, energy, and money becomes a reflection of our inner beliefs. Each of our paths will be unique to our situations.

On the most basic level, simplicity means being honest and sincere with ourselves about our faith and what really matters most to us. Simplicity requires at least two things: being willing to be vulnerable by embracing openness to God and to life, and believing it is God's path to abundant life for us.

Spiritual simplicity involves our relationship with God and our understanding of life. It includes honesty and integrity. May the 40 days of Lent enlighten you as you allow Christ's light to shine more brightly in your lives and lead you into a path of simplicity and abundant life.

During Lent, we pray you will find a small group at CELC to journey with in prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and relationship with God.

*Florence D. Heacock
Small Groups Minister*

Taizé Prayer Services

Join us on the third Monday of each month , 7:15-8:00 pm, in the Sanctuary

February 20, March 19

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical Christian monastic order in Taizé, France, founded in 1940. The community has become one of the world's most important sites of different cultures and different Christian traditions. The Taizé community has sought to demonstrate this in the music and prayers, where songs are sung in many languages, and have included chants and icons from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Through the Taizé community's ecumenical outlook, they are encouraged to live in the spirit of kindness, simplicity and reconciliation. The music emphasizes simple phrases, usually lines from Psalms or other pieces of Scripture, repeated and sometimes also sung in canon.

Women's Retreat



Mark your calendars for the Annual Spring Retreat sponsored by the Women of CELC to be held on *Saturday, April 28, from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm in the Hospitality Room*. Please come and bring your friends for a day of inspiration, fellowship and sharing. Watch for more details to follow.



Our prayer list...

Prayer Corner

Family of Brian Lemley; Paul Swanson; Laura North; Ethan Dschaak; Brent, Jake, and Casey Dschaak; Eleanor Black; Alicia Owens; Steve Perkins and family; Bill Booth; Gleason Cosgrove; Ethan Dschaak; Grayson Brown; Julia Samuel; Tom Parrott; Marie Eason-Williamson; Andrew and Ruth Dambowy; Elke Meldau -Womack; Bobby Larsen; Gene Saylor; Michael Foster; Dr. Lindi Wu; Marie-Laure; Phoebe Clater; Deborah Lambert; Anne Goeltz; Oscar Line; Danny Strunk; Megan Condon; the young men of Nick's Place; Terry and Jane Seaks; the ministry of the Mi Refugio school in Guatemala; the children undergoing treatment at The Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health and their families and caregivers; the Chikumbuso Women and Orphans Project in Zambia.



Thrive Women's Bible Studies

Yes, this remarkable group of women are still meeting twice a month for Bible Study and Fellowship. We meet on the first and third Saturdays of each month at CELC. However, we have broken the mold and have met at people's homes from time to time. Per example, Ingrid opens up her home to us in December for a Christmas breakfast. Her home is always so inviting, with the Christmas tree all decked out and a warm fire blazing in the fire place.

In September we embarked on a Study of the Books of the Bible. Each presenter chooses a Book from the Bible and presents it to the group. This has so far turned out to be very popular and extremely interesting. And in the studies we are becoming aware of the history of the times in the Old and New Testaments.

But we are more than just a Bible Study. In times of sorrow and joy we band together to support and pray for one another. We share lives, our ups and downs and listen to one another. And this is to invite anyone who wants to come and see what we are about, to do just that. We are always ready to grow our family of sisters.

You can contact me, Sanna Solem (sannasolem@gmail.com, 301-571-0050), or Florence Heacock (flohea@heartmindsoul.com).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>February 2012</h1> <p><i>Please see page 7 of this newsletter for small group ministry opportunities throughout the week!</i></p>			1	2 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	3	4 Women's and Men's Groups 9:00-10:30 am
5 9:15 & 11:15 Worship 10:15 Annual Meeting	6 Monday Night Group 7:30 pm	7	8	9 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	10	11
12 9:15 & 11:15 Worship 10:15 Christian Ed	13 Monday Night Group 7:30 pm	14 Rachel Circle 7:30 pm	15 <i>Council 7:00 pm</i>	16 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	17	18 Women's Group 9:00-10:30 am
19 9:15 & 11:15 Worship 10:15 Christian Ed	20 Monday Night Group 7:30 pm <i>Taize Prayer Service</i> 7:15-8:00 pm Connection Deadline 5 pm	21 Martha Circle 10:30 am <i>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper</i> 6:30 pm	22 ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP 7:00 pm	23 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	24	25
26 9:15 & 11:15 Worship 10:15 Christian Ed	27 Monday Night Group 7:30 pm	28	29 Mid-Week Lenten Dinner & Worship 6:30 pm			

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Ji-Na Kim
Organist

Florence Heacock
Minister of Small Groups

W. Karunaratne
Finance Administrator

Church Council

Lisa Stechschulte, president
George Wenchel, vice president
Tim Smith, secretary
Alireza Motameni, treasurer

Pastor Jon Hundt,
Bobby Larsen, Paula Mathis,
Barry McVicker, Suzanne Parrott,
and Nathan Sprenger



SUNDAY MORNINGS

- 9:15 am** Contemporary Worship
with Communion in the Sanctuary
- 10:15 am** Christian Education/Faith Formation
for children and adults
(see details inside newsletter)
- 11:15 am** Traditional Worship with Communion
in the Sanctuary

Mission of The Connection

*To communicate about disciple-making
events and opportunities, all for the
glory of God and to grow His Kingdom.*

Please contribute to The Connection! Let's share all the
exciting ways God is at work here at Christ Lutheran Church!

March Connection Deadline

Submissions for the March issue of The Connection are due
by 5:00 pm on **Monday, February 20.**

*New to CELC? Want to know more about our faith community?
Please email clc@heartmindsoul.com
to begin receiving The Connection and also our weekly e-newsletter.*