

The Visitor

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January 2010
Issue #1 - 10

*University Lutheran Church of Hope
is a welcoming, Christian community of faith
centered in God's grace and
called to demonstrate God's love for the world.*

Shirley's Share

Comings and goings continue to happen in the new year. Many of you are aware that Craig Wiester, our Administrator at University Lutheran Church of Hope for the past ten years, has decided to retire. Yes, many of us think he is too young to do so, but he has plans to care for his dear Sydney and to work fewer hours. His retirement takes effect early in March, but his last actual work day will be the annual meeting of the congregation in February. We will celebrate his time here during that meeting. Craig has been a very important presence in the church office. He is congenial, has done a tremendous job, and cares for this church like it is his own. We are very grateful for all of his good work, and I hope you will express your own thanks to him over the next two months.

We are presently in the process of receiving resumes from candidates to fill this position, so if you are aware of a good candidate, please put that person in contact with either Jack Dant or myself. It is a full-time position.

We are looking forward to the mid-January start of our new Minister of Worship and Music, after the departure of Tim Strand last September. The search process was just completed, and the candidate will probably be made known by the time you receive this newsletter, but I am pleased with our choice and I think he will be an exciting and creative addition to the staff and the worship leadership here. I am excited for him to begin, even as we say thanks to

Bill Beckstrand for his great work, as well as to Brad Althoff and John Haberman, all of whom stepped in willingly to help us as interim directors during the search time. This is a 3/4 time position.

We also are blessed with the presence of Jennifer Dotson, who has assumed the part-time role of minister to our young adults. Jen is also working to get to know some of our university students as well, so she is focusing on the 18-35 age range within the congregation. It is an interesting work-in-progress to help bring these folks together. There are gatherings around theological issues (Theology Tavern), sports activities (kickball last summer), music (a special young adult choir that has sung two times recently, as well as providing instrumental leadership), service projects (Feed My Starving Children), and other activities. Several of our young adults have also recently moved into leadership positions in the congregation, serving on the Vision & Governance Board and in other roles.

I hope you will take time to meet and welcome our new staff people, even as you thank those who have served us so well. More importantly, please plan to get involved in music, young adult ministry, or volunteer work in some capacity. I am excited as we move forward with these talented new people on staff. Many thanks to all of you who support this congregation in so many ways. Pax

—Pastor Craig Shirley

Hope for FMF Says Thanks!

Thanks to all of you who in so many ways contributed to providing a safe, warm, and welcoming home for FMF during Christmas week. Your gifts of time, talent, and presents during this busy season are especially appreciated.

—Jo Schroeder and Bryan Kufus
Hope FMF Co-Coordinator

Hope Book Club

The University Lutheran Church of Hope Book Club will meet on **Sunday, January 10, at 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge**, to discuss *Out Stealing Horses*, by Per Petterson.

Quotes from reviews: “Trond Sander, an Oslo professional who has recently lost his wife and sister, hopes to cure his loneliness by a plunge into solitude. The story is tinged with an autumnal sense of loss and the self-examination of an old man looking back on his life. This book is a minor masterpiece of death and delusion in a Nordic land.” “But the real trick is in the way everything finally, neatly converges into an emotional jolt.” “That’s the effect of Per Petterson’s award-winning novel: It hits you in the heart at close range.”

Our book for February 21 is *The Evolution of God* by Robert Wright. Please call Sonja Peterson at (612) 789-0397 if you have questions or book suggestions.

Women’s Intergenerational Retreat, February 27–28

“*In Praise of Women: Healing All Generations*” – Led by member Beata Rydeen, M.A. in Women’s Studies and certified coach

When: February 27-28, 2010, Saturday 9:00 a.m. – Sunday 11:30 a.m. (3 meals included)

Cost: \$117 (scholarship money available)

Where: Dunrovin Retreat Center (near Stillwater). **Single rooms.**

Also at the retreat: Sign up for 1-hour personal coaching session with Beata (for the first three to sign up), take the Myers-Briggs Personal Inventory, receive a massage on Saturday afternoon, and participate in yoga on Saturday night.

Registration will begin on January 10th by Fellowship Hall. If you would like more information and/or would like to register earlier, contact Ann Beane at spiritbeane@yahoo.com. Questions for Beata should be directed to www.beatarydeen.com. **Deadline for registration is February 14.**

January 10 Fellowship Meal— Fund Raiser for Women’s Retreat Scholarships

The Fellowship Meal on Sunday, January 10, will be a fundraiser for the Women’s Retreat, with hopes of raising funds for scholarship money and other expenses. If you can help with Saturday preparations on the 9th, and/or help on Sunday, please contact Ann Beane at spiritbeane@yahoo.com or Dan O’Loughlin at Education@ulch.org. We are also looking for donations of cake, cookies, or bars. You will also have the opportunity to buy homemade items at a “table rummage sale” of sorts. Contributions are welcome. Let us know what you would like to donate by contacting Ann Beane (see above) or Beata Rydeen at beatarydeen@comcast.net.

Vocation in Uncertain Times

The “Vocation in Uncertain Times” breakfast group will start meeting again after the holidays, probably in mid-January. This is a totally informal group that gets together a couple of mornings each month for coffee and/or breakfast at a local Perkins. Participants come from a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and experiences. We talk about everything from family news to hobbies to the headlines, but also about the challenges of being unemployed, underemployed, or being in other kinds of job-related transitions and new vocational experiences. Everyone is welcome. Call or email Garvin Davenport if you are interested in participating or if you have questions: (651) 645-9708 or pastpresident@ulch.org.

President’s Perspective

A blessed Christmas to you and your family! As we move into this busy, much-anticipated time of year, I am reminded of the need to stop, still the noise, look around, and remind ourselves of what is really important: in our family, our faith, our health, and our work.... Are the efforts of our lives well-aligned with these aspects that we hold so dear?

We may never know the rippling affect that our actions have, but they do make a difference. When Jesus taught the disciples about giving, “not letting your left hand know what your right is doing,” he made it clear that our actions matter, whether or not others are aware of them.

As this year quickly comes to a close, my prayer for you and your family is that you will reconnect with those most important to you; that you will live deeply and remind yourself often of those things that are at the core of what’s important in life—because it all matters.

—Jack Dant,
Congregation President

Hope Senior Club

All seniors and retirees are cordially invited to the first Hope Senior Club gathering of the new year on **Wednesday, January 20, beginning with a noon luncheon. The 1:00 p.m. program** will feature Alec Sweazy, pianist/accordionist. You may remember Alec from *KARE-11 Extra*; he’s the young man from Minnetonka with Williams syndrome and a passion for music. He has studied piano with Joan Minnetti (daughter of University Lutheran Church of Hope members Ludwig & Eleanor Edstrom) for 15 years. He has also studied accordion for 12 years with Larry Malmberg. Alec has been the recipient of several awards and scholarships and, in 2004, graduated from McNally Smith College of Music in Saint Paul. Alec is a member of the Apollo Male Chorus and sings in many concerts and events throughout the year.



Please join us for the luncheon, and then sit back and feast your ears on some fabulous music. Alec will open on accordion with a variety of lively solos; he will later add a violinist. He will follow with classical piano works featuring Spanish and Russian composers. You won’t want to miss this one! Invite your friends as well!

Reservations should be made by Thursday, January 14, with your caller or by phoning Pastor Esther Dant at (651) 636-7834. If transportation is needed, please phone Leona Reyelts at (612) 378-2444. The Southeast Seniors Block Nurse will offer blood pressure checks after the program.



Faith Formation News for All Ages

Sunday School (for children ages three through grade six):

<i>Date</i>	<i>Gospel Lesson in Worship</i>	<i>Godly Play Lesson</i>	<i>Faith Weaver Lesson</i>	<i>Theme For the Day</i>
Jan 3	John 1:10-18 Power to become children of God.	The Boy Jesus in the Temple	Winter week 4 Jesus grows up. Luke 2:39-52	Jesus is special. Jesus prepares for ministry.
Jan 10	Luke 3:15-22 Baptism of Our Lord	Jesus is Baptized	Winter week 5 The Word became flesh. John 1:1-18	People who know Jesus are God's children.
Jan 17	John 2:1-11 Wedding in Cana	Jesus in the Wilderness	Winter week 7 Jesus performs a miracle. John 2:1-11	Jesus did miracles to show us he is God.
Jan 24	Luke 4:14-21 Jesus reads from Isaiah in the synagogue.	Wedding in Cana	Winter week 8 Jesus teaches in the synagogue. Luke 4:14-21	Jesus came for all people.
Jan 31	Luke 4:21-30 Rejection of Jesus in Nazareth.	Liturgical Guide Training	Winter week 9 Jesus is rejected in his home town. Luke 4:22-30	Jesus deserves our love and gratitude.

Sunday Morning Confirmation

Grade 7 meets with Tim Gustafson in room 101 with a focus on the Ten Commandments.

Grade 8 meets with Adam Morton in room 107 with a focus on Martin Luther.

Confirmation Saturday class will be held on **January 9** with a focus on The Patriarchs II – Jacob and Joseph

Sunday morning High School Discussion for students in grades 9-12 will be held in the Youth Room with Jack Dant, Jen Dotson, and Matt Fleming.

Adult Forums

January 3 – Meet Jen Dotson, our new Director of Young Adult Ministries.

January 10 – “Mission Guatemala.” Alden Tetlie will talk about his experiences in this Central American country doing medical mission work. He will provide background information about the sponsoring organization for his time in Guatemala.

January 17 – “A Health Club for the Mind,” by Steve Benson, Executive Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) of the University of Minnesota. Learn more about OLLI and the programs being offered at University Lutheran Church of Hope.

January 24 - Presentation on proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws, by Jack Dant and the Vision & Governance Board.

January 31 - A church budget presentation by Mike Fingerson, Treasurer.

Acolyte Training – Students in fourth grade who have not received acolyte training will participate in this training on January 10, 24, and 31, with their commissioning during the 10:30 worship service on February 7. Jan Sanden will be conducting this training during the Education Hour. Please contact Diane Shallue with any questions.

Liturgical Guide Training for Godly Play Students. On January 31, during the Education Hour, Rebecca Tetlie will instruct Godly Play students and their parents in how to use the Liturgical Guide Materials. These materials were developed several years ago to help younger children follow along during the worship service and learn the order of service. The Guides consist of folders with symbols that are put into the proper order with Velcro® attachments. Once a month until June, large posters of the symbols for the various parts of the worship service will be hung in the front of the Sanctuary to help the children and parents follow along. Please contact Diane Shallue with questions.

Baptismal Recognition on January 10 – Children who have been baptized in 2009 will be recognized and blessed during the 10:30 a.m. worship service on January 10, the Sunday when we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord. Each family will receive a white rose and a *Beginner's Bible* as part of this Faith Steps recognition.

Review Sessions on the Congregation's Child Protection Policy will be held on January 17 & 31, from 9:00 – 9:20 a.m. The two sessions will have identical content, so participants should attend just one of them. All who work with children or youth at University Lutheran Church of Hope are required to attend one of the Safeguarding God's Children training events, which involves 90 minutes of video and discussion and a review of our Child Protection Policy. Diane Shallue will lead the review of the policy. If you have not previously attended this training, please let her know which of the two group sessions you will be attending. If you cannot attend either one of the sessions, please let her know and she will guide you in a review of the policy. Another full training session will not be held until next August.

Prayer Partners for Lent

Would you be a prayer partner for a child or youth from our congregation? The Children's Ministry Team has set a goal this year of recruiting 50 people who have been confirmed and are willing to pray weekly during Lent for a child or youth. We are asking that you pray once a week or more during Lent, which begins on February 17, and send them a greeting card at Easter. Contact Diane Shallue to volunteer, at (612) 331-5988, ext. 19, or dianes@ulch.org.

Special Event on February 14: Prayer Partners will meet each other on Sunday, February 14 during the special intergenerational event at 9:25 a.m. in Fellowship Hall with Chillion Leach, an artist and art servant. She will lead us in an interactive prayer activity that will create large prayer mandalas. *Mandalas* are circular drawings that use various symbols. Make sure you put this date on your calendar.

Youth Update

In the midst of Christmas shopping, baking, and hot beverages, the youth of University Lutheran Church of Hope have taken on a unique challenge. As a joint venture with the Minneapolis Synod, we are giving up beverages other than water for two weeks. By drinking only water, we are saving money that would normally be spent on Starbucks or sodas. The money that we save will be pooled together at the end of the two weeks and sent to build wells in sister congregations in developing nations. This project is also a way to practice the season of Advent on a daily basis. In this season of waiting and mystery and awe, Kirsten Mebust challenged us this month to be aware of “The Presence of Absence.” By giving up unnecessary beverages, we are aware of the absence of clean water in the world and are giving a gift of presence (our mindful and prayerful presence) to the people whose lives will be touched by our monetary gifts. As we wait for the coming of the Christ child, we are aware of the deep yearning for salvation in our world, and we practice a mindfulness of the suffering on our streets, and in our world. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

—Matt Fleming, Youth Director

The Circles of Hope

Last week I went to the Christmas parties at our church’s circles. Dorcas Circle met at Millie Holmgren’s. It was a lovely brunch, with a tour of her home and its amazing decorations. On the mantle were the *nisse* and the *tomte*. She said some were Norwegian and some were Swedish, and at Christmas time they couldn’t fight with each other. They had to get along. They are all mixed together on the mantle.

Later I went to the Gloria Circle in the Lounge. It was a warm and cozy setting for an amazing lunch. I love this food, but love seeing all the people more. Such a long, long history both circles have. Children were part of this beginning, but the meetings and friendships have continued over fifty years. I am thankful for all they have meant to this congregation.

But at both meetings, they expressed a desire that they would love to welcome any new members. Marilyn Asp joined just three years ago. So you can be sure that you will be welcomed as a friend.

—Pastor Esther Dant

From the Visitation Pastor

In just a few short weeks I will have been with you for a year. It has been a rich time. So often I think about how getting to know and growing to love University Lutheran Church of Hope’s people has been an unexpected gift from God. The wisdom and the humor and the grief in the visits I make remain with me. We all are forced to say goodbyes before we are ready. My brother’s birthday is the 23rd of December. It is an important day for me to honor him in a significant way. James Miller says in *Winter Grief, Summer Grace*, “*You could not imagine you would ache in all the ways you do.*” Edna Mickelson tells of her friendship with Inga Saari and how she misses her so much. They talked often. She said friends have told her she needs to make friends with younger people, so she said, “*I consider you my friend. Is that okay?*” “*Oh, yes,*” I tell her.

At my last visit with Bill and Anita Smith, they asked, “*What’s new with you?*” I told them about my venture back to oil painting, this time not teaching, but being the student. Bill remembered how, in his seminary class on Spiritual Care, I expressed my love of art. He told of many who have this love and who don’t give it a place in their life. He said it causes a grief for them. Then there came the welling up. I knew so well that grief.

And so, as another new year begins, I ask you to think about this. There is grief we can do nothing about. Someone has now become a memory. But there may be grief that needs our attention. It may be broken relationships. The new movie, *Invictus*, tells of Nelson Mandela and the meaning of forgiveness for him after 27 years in prison: “*Forgiveness liberates the soul. That’s why it’s such a powerful weapon.*”

It may be a grief as Bill described—some gift that we’ve been given but which still hasn’t been given a place in our life. We can especially hear this in the encouragement of others. What gift that God has already given you can you encourage in yourself during this New Year?

Peace,

—Pastor Esther Dant



Book Collection for Southeast READS

Book Collection for Southeast READS: The Southeast Minneapolis Council on Learning is collecting new and used children's books to distribute to children at Luxton and Van Cleve Community Parks and the before- and after-school programs at Marcy and Pratt Schools. Both picture books and chapter books are welcome. Please put books into the collection box under the table in the Library. This will be the third year that we have done this collection. We have contributed more than 400 books to this project and have received much appreciation from the Southeast Minneapolis Council on Learning. This collection will continue until Easter.

People of Hope

What fabulous food and what a great time we had at the **Pot Luck Smörgasbord** on Lucia Day, the 13th! There was a lot of buzz around the room about the luscious Swedish Cream dessert. Yes, Swedish-born Bertha Hanson brought it, but it was made by her daughter, Laurel. Bertha cannot be positive, but we both have the same recipe, and Laurel probably used it. If you would like to have a copy of mine, just email Ruth Fingerson at Rfingerson@comcast.net.

Many heartfelt thanks are due **Ann Agrimson** and her crew for putting on the smörgasbord. There was a lot of work going on in the kitchen, for which we are grateful.

Michael Pearson is still in Afghanistan, and loving what he is doing. His mom, Kaye, reports that they are able to contact him on Skype. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Skype, it is a way to use the Internet to make phone calls to people anywhere in the world, without incurring connection charges. The Pearsons and Michael both have web cameras on their computers, so they can also see one another while they talk. Your prayers are appreciated.

Another Child of Hope is now a pastor. **Erin Bents** Martinson (born in 1974) is Pastor for Outreach at Christ Lutheran Church in Pacific Beach (San Diego) California. Erin graduated from Luther College and Luther Seminary. She and her husband Tim are the parents of 11-month-old Dara.

Marge Halvorson has been counting Sunday offering money on Monday mornings for 23 years! **Roy** joined her part time, then full-time after faithful counter John Mackoskey (Michael Pearson's grandfather) died in December 2005. The Halvorsons are retiring for some well-deserved restful Monday mornings. If you would be willing to help count the Sunday offering, please contact our treasurer, Mike Fingerson, at (651) 633-5316 or at lfingerson@comcast.net.

On November 22 we dedicated our new baptismal font, lovingly designed and supervised by **Wayne Lee** (in honor of his parents) and **Tim Abrahamson**. The granite trim is recovered from the former font, and the wood case is carved in the style of the original reredos in our sanctuary. Once again we have living water, to celebrate our baptismal birth.

Congratulations to **Carol Flaten**, who recently earned a doctorate in nursing practice. Carol completed her advanced degree while also maintaining her full-time teaching load in the School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota.

Do you have news to share? Call or email Ruth Fingerson at (651) 633-5316 or Rfingerson@comcast.net.

Staff

Pastors:

Craig Shirley
Esther Dant

Cantor:

Director of Education and Adult Small-Group Ministries:

Diane Shallue

Youth Director:

Matthew Fleming

Director of Young Adult Ministries:

Jen Dotson

Administrator:

Craig Wiester

Weekend Custodian:

William Frank

Working in partnership with Lutheran Campus

Ministry Staff:

Eva Jensen
Kate Reuer

Vision & Governance Board

Officers:

President: Jack Dant

Vice President: Gregg Landmark

Past President: Garvin Davenport

Treasurer: Mike Fingerson

Ministry Areas:

Worship & Music: Uli Koester

Youth & Young Adults: Ann Beane

Education: Dan O'Loughlin

Hope in the World: JoAnn Bablitch

Relational Ministries:

Renée Real-Banas

Support Areas:

Operations:

Mike Fingerson,
Garvin Davenport

Leadership Development

& Communications:

Jack Dant; Gregg Landmark

The Visitor

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Articles for *The Visitor* may be submitted via email or in the church office. They must be signed. Electronic submissions in either Microsoft® Word or plain text format are strongly preferred. Articles may be edited for length. Contributors are responsible for clearly identifying any material that is from published sources and for obtaining appropriate permissions. Send submissions and correspondence to visitor@ulch.org

The deadline for submitting articles is the 15th of every month (for the following month's issue).

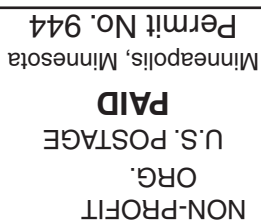
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Treasurer's Report

Operations

While November was budgeted for a positive cash flow, we did better than expected—primarily because expenses were down. The net result was a positive cash flow of \$6,759 versus a budget of \$4,363.

In past years the month of December has had substantially higher income than other months of the year. With this in mind, the budget calls for about \$20,000 of income above a normal month. While this increase is less than the average of the last three years, it is still a substantial number. In addition, we are still \$2,585 short relative to budget at the end of November and also short approximately \$7,500 for masonry work that has not been invoiced.

A summary of actual numbers for November and Year to Date are as follows:

	November		Year to Date		Over/(under)
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	
General Giving and Holiday	38,207	42,480	416,072	438,403	(22,331)
Rental and Extraordinary	4,950	5,460	54,527	57,119	(2,592)
Total Revenue	43,157	47,940	470,599	495,522	(24,923)
Total Expenses	36,398	43,577	496,241	518,579	(22,338)
Net Income	6,759	4,363	(25,642)	(23,057)	(2,585)



Invitation to Hope

Total pledges are now \$461,024, a decrease of \$5,590 since the end of August. Considering job losses connected with the economy, we are fortunate there has not been a larger impact. Since August we have had another \$731 contributed that was not pledged. Also, actual receipts to date are \$239,848, so we are \$6,900 ahead of the August number and within \$1,594 of the amount scheduled to be paid. In summary, considering the economy I feel we are currently doing very well on our Invitation to Hope campaign.

—Mike Fingerson, Treasurer