

# The Master's Notes

## December 2009

### Lutheran Church of The Master

*a Reconciling in Christ congregation*

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The Reverend Deborah Andersen, Interim Pastor



Craig Shepherd 2000

### **FROM THE PASTOR**

The First Sunday of Advent has arrived, and are we any more ready this year to consider the magnitude of the transformation in store for us and for all creation with the coming of Christ? As I began my sermon on Sunday I asked how many there were aware that it was Advent, and who might have had a plan for celebrating Advent this year. After the service, in a conversation with two or three of our worshipers I heard some disappointment that I had not really suggested a plan for observing this Advent time. So, here are some thoughts about Advent shared from the introduction of a book I'm reading during Advent called *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas* (Orbis Books, 2001), and some suggestions for observing this holy season.

Advent (literally "arrival") has been observed for centuries as a time to contemplate Christ's birth. Most people today, however, acknowledge this season with only a blank look. For the vast majority of us, December flies by in a flurry of activities, and what is called "the holiday season" turns out to be the most stressful time of the year. Advent is a time of conflicting emotions. We are eager, yet frazzled; sentimental, yet indifferent. One minute we glow at the thought of getting together with our family and friends; the next we feel utterly lonely.... Even we who do not experience such tensions...often miss its point. Content with candles and carols and good food, we bask in the warmth of familiar traditions, in reciprocated acts of kindness, and in feelings of general goodwill. How many of us remember the harsh realities of Christ's first coming: the dank stable, the cold night, the closed door of the inn? How many of us share the longing of the ancient prophets, who awaited the Messiah with such aching intensity that

they foresaw his arrival thousands of years before he was born?

...Once we (become mindful of how Christ's birth took place), we will sense immediately that Advent marks something momentous: God's coming into our midst. That coming is not just something that happened in the past. It is a recurring possibility here and now...Advent is not merely a commemorative event or an anniversary, but a yearly opportunity for us to consider the future, second Advent—the promised coming of God's kingdom on earth.

You may recall some family traditions from your childhood that can help shape your Advent contemplation. The practice of gathering or making symbols to represent the Old Testament roots of Jesus and hanging them on a Jesse tree; Advent calendars and the anticipation of opening the little doors to find a Bible verse or symbol of the season (or sweetest of all: a chocolate!); stirring up a Christmas pudding or cake or cookies even as the Prayer of the Day for each Sunday in Advent beseeches, "Stir us up, O Lord...." Make (or buy) your own Advent wreath to light the appropriate number of candles at home each week, anticipating the Christ who is our Light; read about the saints whose feast days come during Advent: St. Andrew, St. Nicholas, Santa Lucia, among others; think about what simple gifts you could make to give this year, pray for the recipients as you make your gifts, and enjoy the anticipation of their receiving your gift; use a coin folder or box as a daily reminder of how Christ comes to the poor and outcast when we share even a small portion of what we have; make decorations like paper chains to hang on your tree or around a mirror in your home that reflects light. Add a link every day and write on the inside a prayer for peace, for family and friends, for the needs of those you know. I hope these simple suggestions have sparked some ideas of your own for making time and space in your life this

*(Continued)*

Advent season for slowing down a little, breathing deeper, and letting the immensity of God's gift of Love Incarnate surround and fill you.  
Waiting with you for the Christ,  
Pastor D. Andersen

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our donations totaled \$10,127.75 in November, bringing our year-to-date donations to \$113,345.07. This brings our YTD giving to 77.6% of our budgeted goal of \$146,000 for the entire year. To reach our budget goal of \$146,000 by year's end, we need to receive \$32,654.93. Please be as generous as you can to help us to continue to meet our ministry together!

Thank you,  
Emily Jackson-Yano

## MISSION EXPLORATION TEAM (M.E.T.)

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The M.E.T. committee of Lutheran Church of the Master (LCM) met once a month during the summer to examine the history of our church, identify opportunities to help expand our church community and determine the areas we would like prospective pastors to focus on in order to help maintain and grow the congregation.

Under the direction of Pastor George Tan, the M.E.T. committee was introduced to PERCEPT that provided a demographic breakdown of the communities within the church's zip code (90025). The analysis showed the diversity of groups in the area that include college students, immigrants, couples, "yuppies," and a significant homeless community. It was surprising to see that 54% of households in the area have no faith involvement. The current congregational profile of LCM is a cross section of ages, ethnicities and socioeconomic circumstances. The PERCEPT findings illuminated the group that we can explore the possibility of increased outreach to such as college students and young professionals looking for a "home" and a place to serve.

LCM has a unique relationship with Music and the Arts. Our sanctuary is regularly open to local theater and music recitals. Church members have written and performed long-running plays with spiritual content and produced a compline service that ran for two years. The strength, quality and history of our Choir, Music Programs and other artistic activities have served to keep the congregation united, invite new members and generate interest. We seek to leverage this into a spirit driven force for outreach and charitable activities.

## STATUS OF THE CALL PROCESS

The Call Committee met with Agnes McClain, from the Synod Office, on Tuesday, October 27, 2009. As a part of the Call Committee process in calling a new pastor, we held two congregational workshops. We asked everyone to fill out a questionnaire that the committee now is reading over so we can complete our "Congregational Profile" before we receive any candidate names from Bishop Nelson. The Congregational Profile is a detailed profile of our congregation, congregational composition and needs, neighborhood make-up and needs, future pastoral needs and our mission and vision for the future.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Barbara Browning at (310) 393-6844. Our Call Committee members are: Kevin Grant, Deborah Warren, Richard Levine, and Barbara Browning

## CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONCERT

The City of Angels Children's Choir and the West Los Angeles Children's Choir will perform here in our sanctuary Saturday, December 5, at 7:00 p.m. Directed by Nancy Ruczynski and Barbara Silberg, the two choirs total forty children. They will sing songs from different religious and cultural traditions to celebrate "Peace on Earth." The children themselves have even written one song.

Admission is free. Contributions to the WLA Food Bank are encouraged. Come, enjoy the very special sounds of children's voices!

## ANNUAL ELECTION CONGREGATION MEETING

The annual congregational meeting will be immediately following worship on **December 13**. The purpose of this congregational meeting as directed by our constitution is to elect the officers of the congregation as well as elect additional members to the Congregation Council. Make a note on your January 2010 calendar to reserve the date of our congregational meeting on January 17. At that meeting we will receive and review the annual report, adopt the budget for 2010, and consider any other pertinent business.

## WOMEN'S TEA

On Saturday, **December 12**, at 11:00 a.m., all women of the congregation and their guests are invited to gather at the Tudor House in Santa Monica (1403 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) for our Annual Holiday Tea. Contact the church office to reserve your space by December 8, or for more information, and/or to arrange to carpool to this annual holiday event.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY !

Mark Wischkaemper	December 14
Ray Fanning	December 14
Dee Nickel	December 22
Wayne Wetts	December 22
Sarah Foss	December 23

## SPECIAL MUSIC DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

**12/6 Advent 2-** The Choir and Soloists will be joined by strings in excerpts from Part 1 of Handel's Messiah.

**12/13 Advent 3-** The choir will sing Henry Purcell's anthem *Rejoice in the Lord Always*, known as the "Bell Anthem" for the opening bell-like passages, and several of our talented soloists will be accompanied by cello and flute in music by Bach, Rameau and Handel.

**12/20 Advent 4-** Special guests The Atlantic Ave. Brass will offer music for brass and organ, bringing our Advent observances to a conclusion with the singing of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel". Additional music includes a choral setting of the English folk song "Gabriel to Mary Came" and a vocal solo "Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly" for piano and voice by the contemporary arranger Phil Kadidlo.

**12/24 Christmas Eve-** The choir and soloists with The South Coast Brass will present familiar Christmas anthems, solos and hymns by John Rutter, Adolphe Adam and Craig Kingsbury.

## CHRISTMAS EVE MUSIC

Mark your calendar! At 8:00 p.m. on December 24, the choir with harp and trumpet will begin the Christmas Eve celebrations with a short concert of Christmas anthems. We will continue the worship in a traditional Lessons and Carols service. Bring your friends.

## CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

On Christmas Day morning we join with another Westside ELCA congregation, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, at 10:00 a.m. here at Lutheran Church of the Master, for a joint festival Eucharist for which Pastor Joshua N. Elliott-McGuffie will serve as preacher.

## WESTSIDE FOOD BANK "FOOD DRIVE"

Now, and until January 8, 2010, we are participating in a food drive along with other churches on the Westside to benefit the Westside Food Bank. We are asking that you help us fill the barrels in the Narthex by bringing the following items to church on any Sunday.

**The following are the types of food we like to receive: (no glass please, except for baby food.)**

**Cans of:** tuna, vegetables, and soup, fruits and fruit juices, pork & beans, and stews and other meats;

**Packaged Foods:** pasta, lentils, pinto and other beans, macaroni & cheese, packaged dinners, instant soups, hot and cold cereals, peanut butter & other nut butters,

nutritional bars: protein, granola, and energy or breakfast bars. Baby foods also are urgently needed;

**Please also consider bringing the following items for infants & toddlers:** infant formula, jar foods – all flavors and stages, crackers, teething biscuits and cookies, raisins & fruit snacks, juices: jars, cans, pouches and boxes, and infant and children's cereals.

## FLOWER CHART

<b>December 6</b>	Janet Kaaya in honor of Lutheran Church of the Master congregation.
<b>December 13</b>	Open
<b>December 20</b>	Amanda Bialek in honor of her family.
<b>December 24</b>	Barbara Browning, in memory of her father, Albert Browning.
<b>December 25</b>	Dave Shelton, in honor of Jesus Christ.
<b>December 27</b>	Sarah and Dave Knickerbocker, in honor of our children's birthdays.

## OUR PRAYER LIST

**Peggy Anderson**  
**Bill Ashton** (cousin of Emily Jackson-Yano)  
**Dolores Brown** (friend of Peggy Anderson)  
**Lois Bykiewiez** (sister of Peggy Anderson)  
**The Campbell Family** (friends of Dave Shelton)  
**Judith Cowie** (aunt of Charles Peruchini)  
**Donna Crean**  
**Pastor Joshua Elliott-McGuffie**  
**Sara Erman** (friend of Sarah Knickerbocker)  
**Pastor Nancy Hamm** (Christ Lutheran Church, Downey)  
**Wafa Ibrahim** (friend of Sarah Knickerbocker)  
**Chris Jackson** (nephew of Emily Jackson-Yano)  
**Lois Jackson** (mother of Emily Jackson-Yano)  
**Jonathan Kovac** (brother of Deborah Warren)  
**Pastor Gary & Madeleine Marshall**  
**Gisela Marx**  
**Derick Metzger** (family of Peggy Anderson)  
**Janice Newberry** (family of Steve Newberry)  
**Marty Oliver** (friend of Kaitlyn Nickel)  
**Marcy Pine**  
**Ed Polite** (friend of Robin Nickel)  
**Eddi Rytterager** (friend of the Nickel family)  
**Jackie Savage**  
**Heidi and Joshua Schilling** (friends of Robin Nickel)  
**Lori Splinter** (Vice President of the Synod)  
**Igor Tashlitskiy** (friend of the Knickerbocker)  
**Mary Ann Wright** (sister of Millie Rojas)  
**Frances Willms**  
**Members of the AA Groups**