



Living God Newsletter

Sunday Worship 8 & 10:30 AM
& 6:30 PM

A church for all people

3200 Horseshoe Pike
Honey Brook, PA 19344
Phone: 610-273-9383

Volume 19, Number 1

Pastor Richard Moore

February 2008



Community Observance of Lent

Local pastors are planning a community ecumenical observance of Lent, in hopes for greater unity among Christians. Called "Journey with Christ Together", the program is sponsored by Fairview Presbyterian Church, Living God Lutheran Church, Honey Brook United Methodist Church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Honey Brook Presbyterian Church and St. Peter's Catholic Church.

The Journey begins with a worship service for Ash Wednesday at Living God Lutheran Church on February 6 at 7:30 PM. Pastor Mark Atkinson from Fairview Presbyterian will preach.

The following five Wednesday nights, people will gather for a buffet dinner and discussion at the Honey Brook Methodist Church, from 6-8 PM. Each week a different pastor will lead the discussion.

Volunteers from the Methodist church will arrange the buffet dinner on February 13. For the remaining Wednesdays, multiple contributors will be solicited from all the churches. Childcare will be provided.

The program concludes with a worship service for the Great Vigil of Easter on Saturday, March 22 at St. Marks' Episcopal Church at 8 P.M. The Rev. Scott Friedgen-Veitch from Honey Brook United Methodist will preach. The public is invited and encouraged to participate in these events.

Bishop Makes Visit to Holy Land

The Rev. Eric C. Shafer, senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, and The Rev. Claire S. Burkat, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), will visit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) during Ash Wednesday week with an entourage of Lutheran pastors and a technical operative for effective communication back to the states. The trip is from January 31 to February 8.



The purpose of the visit is to accompany the new bishop on her first visit to the Holy Land and to express support for Palestinian Lutherans in Jerusalem, Jordan and the West Bank.

While there, Rev. Shafer will preach his Ash Wednesday sermon from the Mt. of Olives outside Jerusalem. His message will also be projected back to the United States for the Ash Wednesday services at Trinity.

Bishop Burkat and the others travel to visit Jerusalem's small Lutheran population as more and more Palestinian Christians emigrate from the Holy Land. Because of physical barriers, political conflicts and religious struggles in the region, only 2,000 baptized Lutherans live today in the Holy Land and Jordan. In comparison, more than 250,000 Lutherans live in the metropolitan Philadelphia area. Though Palestinian Christians have been there since the first Pentecost, the roots of the ELCJHL began in the mid 19th century.



Pancake Supper

SHROVE TUESDAY February 5 is the day before Ash Wednesday which heralds the beginning of Lent. This day is best known as Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day.

A **Pancake Supper** will be served at Living God Church from **5 to 7:30 p.m.**

Cost is \$2. for children; \$5. for adults; and \$12. for families. Proceeds will go to our Education Programs.



First Communion Classes

Children in the fifth grade, and those children believed ready for Holy Communion by their parents, are invited to attend two classes prior to receiving their first Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. Classes will be held February 3 at 12 pm and February 10 at 12 pm.

Thank You! Thank You!

Our heart felt thanks to Linda Dierksheide and Carol Schmidt, who have both resigned. Linda after 9 years as Treasurer and Carol as chairperson of the Finance Committee. Both positions required many hours of their time and attention. Thanks again.

Always check the bulletin board at church for additional events and announcements



Don't delay – Pledge Forms Needed!

by Carol Schmidt

Generally a church budget is based on the amount pledged plus a percentage of anticipated increase (new members, generous givers, etc.) and the previous years giving in the plate.

FINANCE REPORT

This year created a difficulty for the Finance Committee in recommending a budget to the Council that was not supported by these commitments. Only 29 pledges have been received totaling \$40,000. This amount is too small to create a budget and so a leap of faith was required, as well as an estimated budget which the Council approved.

There are probably various reasons for this, one of them being that the stewardship letters were late getting out and arrived during the holidays. Perhaps your pledge form and time and talent sheet is still at home and you just haven't had time to fill it out and send it in. Maybe you lost your forms and you need to pick up new ones at the church or call the church office to have new ones mailed to you. Or, maybe you just didn't realize how very important your pledge is to the health of Living God Lutheran Church.

This year the congregation voted on increases that now require follow through to meet these increases. You might ask "If times are tight why did we finish the year in the black?" We were able to be in the black because a generous contribution was made the last week of the year - but this contribution is designated for the Blue Grass service.

We also did it by not following through on some items originally requested. For example the amount budgeted as a donation to Steeple to People for the last three months of the year was not made in order to "stay in the black." In addition some areas did not spend the money allocated to them. The problem with this method is that it doesn't follow the budget that you as a congregation voted on. Some recommended cutbacks have also been suggested by the Finance Committee, to be put into place until we can be in a more comfortable financial status.

In the meantime we need your pledge forms! Your time and talent sheets are just as important. Please give prayerful consideration to your pledge of money, time and talent, and communicate that to the Finance Committee so that we can plan a great new year for Living God Church.

Bluegrass Service Taped for Radio Show

On Sunday, January 20, Dave Kline, from radio station WEEU, taped the 3rd Worship Service at Living God Church for airing on his radio show called Mountain Folk. WEEU has been "The Voice of Berks County" for 75 years.

Mountain Folk, heard every Sunday morning from 9-10 a.m., hosted by Kline, a.k.a. East Side Dave, is "the show for people who enjoy bluegrass, folk, old-time acoustic, outdoor, mountain music, mountain activities and mountain culture", according to the station's web site. Kline, the promoter and producer of his show, brought his own recording equipment.

A potluck supper was held after the service to thank Kline for the gift of his promotion. Fifty-five people attended the service. A date for the airing of the service has not been announced yet.



New Year, New Activities

The month of January saw new Fellowship activities within our congregation.

January 14, 11 women met from 1-3 p.m., for an informally structured group prompted by a desire to socialize and foster friendships. The ladies will get-together the 2nd Monday of each month and share hosting the gatherings at the church. The next social will be **February 11.**

On January 16, eight women attended a similar session from 7 to 9 p.m. This group will get-together in the evening on the 3rd Monday of the month. Their next get-together is **February 18.** All women are welcome to attend either social.

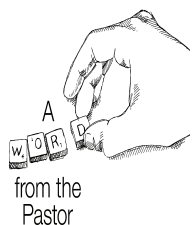
Saturday, January 26, the newly revised **Adult Fun and Fellowship Group** went bowling. Future adult social events are being planned. Watch for **Family Fun Nights.**

Invitations to five **Small Group** socials were also issued in January. These were held in the homes of congregation members. The final two are on **Sat. February 2** and **Sat. February 9.** These Small Group ministries are to help members get to know each other and feel they belong, or that there is a place for them at Living God

ATTENTION



Who: Jr. and Sr. High Youth
When: Starting in February
Where: Living God Church
Why: To have fun, to enjoy fellowship, to share God's love with new friends.



“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

Romans 8:22-25

The expectant mother and father who wait through the labor pains for the joy which they know is coming. The adopting parents who wait through the labor pains of paperwork, red tape, and court dates for the joy which they know is coming. These people are intimately familiar with the pain associated with the kind of patience to which Paul exhorts the church. Waiting for God’s saving grace is like waiting through the labor pains of child birth. Could Paul be clearer; more poignant? Could Paul be more right? I don’t think so.

Paul is not only speaking of individual converts in Rome. He is also making an explicit reference to the pain which a church endures as it grows. Growing Pains! We know that growth is a good thing for a church. Just as we know that giving birth to a child is a good thing. But, we are also becoming more and more aware of the “labor” pains that are associated with this process. People who once felt a sense of belonging, vitality, possibly, even authority, now find themselves feeling lost, and a bit confused. People who once felt the comfort of family from being able to know and care for every member of the church, now find that those they don’t know outnumber those they do. Growing Pains! We know that it’s good for our church to grow. But, the process of growth is a painful one. It is one that tempts us to retreat toward the false hope that one day everything will be the way it once was. We know this isn’t true. Just as a mother in labor knows that there is nothing to stop the birthing process.

But, Paul doesn’t only exhort the church to stand firm through the birthing pains. He also reminds the church that this painful process leads to the birth of hope. This is a process of God’s doing, and it leads to the birth of something new that God is doing with us. Therefore, as Paul says, we have a true hope because it is a hope for something that we cannot yet see. So, we wait patiently. Through the difficulty of transition, I ask all of us together to be patient with what God is doing. But, more than mere patience, I urge us together to be hopeful, for hope is greater than patience, because hope is patience with God. And, with God all things are possible!

As we wait hopefully on God, there are a few things that we can do together to ease the birthing pains. We can make a conscious effort to plan and attend fellowship events. Opportunities like bowling, going to movies, and just getting to know one another through small group ministries can be a helpful and healing source refuge from things. In other words, while we are waiting hopefully upon God, let’s have some fun together. My guess is, while we are having fun with one another, allowing our minds a bit of a reprieve from the growing pains, God will surprise us with the birth of something new and wonderful. Just you wait and see!

+Rich

Steeple to People Ministry

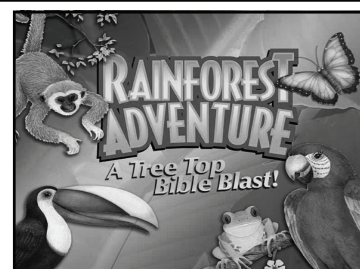
by Carol Schmidt

You are probably aware of the food gathering for the Steeple to People food cupboard but perhaps you were not aware of all the ways this organization works in the community. A refuge house accommodates up to three families at a time. This is considered short term housing for people who need to leave an unsafe situation, financially unable to find housing, etc.

The Youth Center in Honey Brook allows the youth in the area a place to congregate and socialize in a safe, Christian atmosphere. The youth minister organizes camping trips, Bible studies, and other activities.

The Thrift Store, located on Rt. 322, accepts donations and offers the items at a reasonable cost to help contribute to the needs of people in the community. The Thrift Store generates approximately \$6,000 per month to assist the ministry of Steeple to People.

In addition to offering food, funds are provided to assist with rent, heat, electric, transportation, health needs, etc., and the emotional and spiritual needs of the person are addressed as well. Please consider bringing a food donation, shopping at the Thrift Store, donating items to the Thrift Store, or making a monetary donation.



coming to

Living God Church

The 2008 Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme will give kids a chance to experience a sky high time in the tree-tops learning to care for God’s awesome creation and each other too!

Dates and details will be announced soon.



Living God Lutheran Church

3200 Horseshoe Pike

Honey Brook, Pennsylvania 19344

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Building a Future for God's People

by Mary T. Petrofske

"First comes the congregation, next it's the church".

That was the headline in the Religion Section of the Philadelphia Inquirer Friday, May 26, 2000. The article told of the groundbreaking ceremonies held on May 21, 2000 for the building that would house Living God Lutheran Church of Honey Brook.

The history of Living God begins in August 1991, when a city-trained minister with 28 years of service got a new assignment that required he come to a rural Chester County town and knock on doors. The Rev. P. Richard Grove took the assignment and began knocking on doors.

Finally, the first worship service was held in March 1992 at the old Honey Brook Elementary School on Main Street. Choir practice, business meetings and Bible study groups were held in the homes of members. Other churches loaned their facilities for funerals and weddings.

In 1993, when membership reached 100, Rev. Grove petitioned the Lutheran governing body for a charter. On October 31, 1993, Living God Lutheran Church was organized as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

During those years, the congregation found many ways to "release the energy of God's Spirit for ministry". A softball league; Saturday Night Live fun and fellowship

group; Family Value and Faith Development project; a Children's Choir; Family Camping; Midweek Bible Study; Fall Festival; and Shoofly pies delivered to first time visitors to name a few.

We have come a long way, and as a congregation have had many special experiences and faced a number of challenges, the greatest, up to now, probably the building of a church.

All the activities were important and essential to any church. But, it was the mutual belief, expressed in the hymn *We Are The Church* that inspired those first members and continues to reflect the congregation today.

I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together.

All who follow Jesus All around the world! Yes, we're the church together!

The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people! We're many kinds of people, with many kinds of faces, all colors and all ages too, from all times and places. I count if I am ninety or nine or just a baby; there's one thing I am sure about and I don't mean maybe.

I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together.

All who follow Jesus All around the world! Yes, we're the church together!