

Living God Lutheran Church

OPEN ARMS

Volume XV, Issue I

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For surely
I KNOW THE
plans
I have for
YOU,
says the
Lord...
TO GIVE YOU A
future
WITH
Hope.
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV



Special Point of Interest:

Submit content for **OPEN ARMS** by the 20th of each month for the upcoming month's issue. You can give articles/information to Donna Lewis, Leo or Lee Ann Cognetti, or send to lacog@comcast.net.

Thank you.

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Dear Living God Folks,

The cold of winter is upon us. So, naturally, I'm thinking of

warm summer days by the pool. ;-) Wishful thinking I suppose, but when it's cold, my thoughts wander to warmer memories. My parents had a pool in the backyard; it was one of those 4ft. deep, above ground types. There was this wooden deck next to one side of it. From there, I would dip my toes in to test the temperature. You know how this goes: you have every intention of getting into the pool, but jumping in without even bothering to sample how cold that first plunge is going to feel seems, somehow, foolish. Yet, learning that the water *is* cold is no big revelation—you already knew that. But, now that you've sampled it, getting into that cold water seems, suddenly, out of the question. So, you now realize that if you had just jumped in, your body temperature would have adjusted, and you would already be enjoying a refreshing dip in the pool on a hot day. But no, you had to do what you thought was smart

and sample it first, and now you're just sitting on the edge, afraid of facing the cold. Hmm... Maybe sampling that water first wasn't the smartest thing to do after all.

Sometimes the fear of taking the plunge can cause us to think ourselves right out of many God-given opportunities.

As this new year begins, we begin a new life of ministry together. Opportunities to pursue God's interests in life are all around us. It is exciting, and I find myself feeling like a child running to the pool on a hot summer day. You may feel this way as well as you look forward to the possibilities yet to be explored in the upcoming year. Yet, at the same time, fear of the cold unknown threatens us, causing us to consider maybe just dipping our toe in for a sample instead of taking the plunge. I know that I have been giving lots of consideration to sampling things before plunging into anything as your pastor. For many very good reasons, that seems like the smart thing to do. Yet, there is something amiss, when (continued on page 2)

From Pastor Rich Moore (continued from page 1)

sampling the temperature leads to standing on the edge while everyone else enjoys the pool.

When Jesus invited Peter out of the boat to walk on the water with him (Matthew 14:25-36), Peter wasn't given the option of dipping his toes into the water first. Jesus just said, "Come." Peter stepped out of the boat of fear, and for a couple of steps began to walk on the water with Jesus. What an exhilarating experience that must have been for Peter? Granted, it was only a couple of steps before he took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink in fear again, but those couple of steps had to have been a thrill. Even if Peter's faith

was small, his little amount of faith was surely fully affirmed in those two steps on the water. Now, if you're reading this saying to yourself, "Wait a minute, Pastor, Peter failed. He sank back into the water. Doesn't this mean we might fail if we take the plunge instead of sampling the water first?" Yes, I suppose so. We might indeed fail. But, look who was right there on the spot when Peter failed. Jesus reached down into the waters of Peter's failure and lifted him back up onto his feet with Him, giving him the opportunity to learn and grow in faith from the two steps on the water he did take. Peter



took the plunge, leaving his boat of fear to follow the command of Jesus, and for a moment in time, he was walking on water, wow!!

In this new year, God will most surely offer opportunities for you and me to join Him in the water. When these present themselves, may we be as courageous as Peter and step out of our fear to walk in faith—even if only for a moment.

God bless you in this new year,

Pastor Rich

Thoughts from Three Wise Men

Those who deeply love never grow old; they may die of old age, but they die young. — Sir Arthur W. Pinero

Inside each of us there are two "warring" entities, the strong and the weak, the bold and the fearful, the large and the small. Each of us has a "big me" and a "little me" inside, and often the "little me" frustrates and paralyzes the "big me." When a person's inner image drops below a certain level, the result is pure misery. —The Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. —Martin Luther King, Jr.

Light in the Darkness

We who claim to be children of God live in a far too violent world. Terrorism, war, random killing and sin too horrible to describe appear all too frequently in the daily news. As Christians, what can we do?

In another dark time, just before the outbreak of World War II, King George VI of England went on the radio to offer a Christmas message of encouragement for his people. As part of his remarks, he read a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins entitled ***God Knows***.

Here's a portion of the poem:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied, "Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone east.

We may not always be able to dispel the threatening darkness, but we can walk through it with God for as long as it lasts. Let us remember these words from the popular hymn:

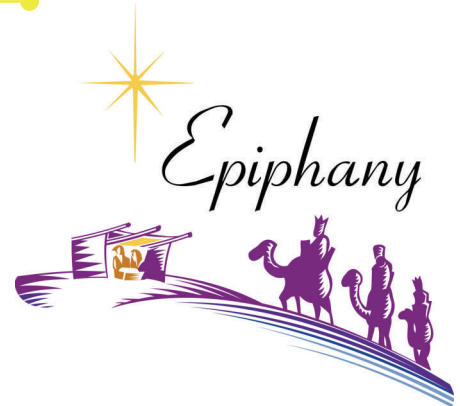
This is my Father's world.
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.

(***This Is My Father's World*** by Maltbie D. Babcock)

Epiphany

January 6th marks the day of Epiphany, the arrival of the three kings or wise men. The three kings were the Gentiles who "came from afar" to offer gifts to the

Christ child. The meaning of the event is that Jesus came as Lord not only for Jews, but for Gentiles as well. Christ is the Savior of the world—the whole world.



The Old Family Bible

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he held in his hand

was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Mama, look what I found!" the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" asked the mother.

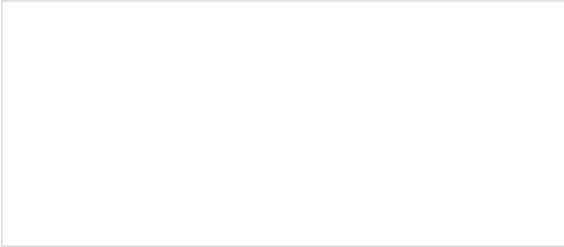
The young boy answered in a voice hushed with awe, "I think it's Adam's underwear."

New Year's Resolution? Let's be sure our family Bibles are not just pressing "Adam's underwear."

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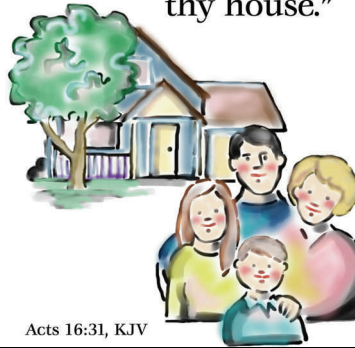
*A church for people who have
no church*

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Extending Open Arms

"Believe on the
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
and thou shalt
be saved, and
thy house."



Acts 16:31, KJV

JANUARY



| | |
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| Sunday, January 8th @ 11:45 A.M | Service Committee Meeting |
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Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year