



## Faith and Learning

People who want to join our congregation often ask whether they need to take any classes. Our answer is Yes and No. Jesus and the early church have given us a double legacy here: on the one hand, Jesus and his followers made it their practice to accept everyone on the spot. When people turned to Jesus trustingly - or even desperately - he often praised them and said “Your faith has made you well.” When Philip was asked by a travelling God-seeker “Look, here is water – what prevents me from being baptized?” Philip simply baptized him. He barely knew him, and he would never see him again, but apparently that was no reason to deny this stranger the gift of baptism. The examples of these spontaneous forms of acceptance inspire our congregation in our own acceptance of all people.

The other half of the legacy of Jesus and the early church is that they clearly valued learning and teaching and instruction in the faith. But what, exactly, should a Christian learn? Where to start? What is most important? The Catechism? Lutheran Doctrine?

The temptation for teachers and learners alike is to turn to doctrine right away and struggle with concepts such as Law and Gospel, Salvation, the Trinity. That is where I have often started in my new member classes, and there are good reasons for this practice.

But if we understand the doctrine of the Trinity, but can’t find ways to reconcile with a loved one after a fight, then we are of little use to the world. The Apostle Paul once wrote: “If I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor 13:2).

Studying our doctrines is fine, but it’s more important to learn how to forgive from the heart – not just once but again, and again, and again. How to love those who are not especially lovable; how to love our enemies; how to welcome the stranger; how to care for the sick; how to be kind and compassionate; how to pray; how to best work towards peace and justice in the world; how to be patient in difficult circumstances; how to resist evil and false paths; how to hold on to hope when all seems hopeless; how to walk in beauty and joy; how to act with courage. We are not born knowing all these things automatically. And sometimes they are really hard to do. We need to help each other with figuring these things out. It will take a life time and we will never become perfect in the art of Christian living, but we can start learning today.

*Pastor Bea*



## Transforming into...

*Theo Olson*

Transformation is a word that has been extremely meaningful to me over the past couple of years as I’ve worked on transforming my mind, body and spirit. Along this journey I’ve learned two important things about transformation: it isn’t easy and it requires time.

These are lessons that Joseph learned as well as we read his story of transformation in Genesis 37-50. Joseph is remembered for more than just his fabulous coat of many colors! Joseph was a gifted dreamer and interpreter of dreams. It was this gift that would later transform him from slave to prisoner to Second-in-Command of Egypt. But God began all this with a dream that Joseph had as a boy. The result was that Joseph was able to help the Egyptians, and his family, survive a horrible period of famine. Certainly this wasn't easy and it took time.

At Christ the Good Shepherd (CGS) we are also on a journey of transformation. Some of us have participated in surveys through Natural Church Development which have provided meaningful insight on the health of our faith community. This summer we took time to reflect on our dreams for CGS with each other during worship and gathering for suppers in our homes. And there are many other discussions and prayers that have occurred over the years expressing our hopes and dreams for our congregation.

### **Transformation 2011**

Recently, The Natural Church Development Team (NCD) met to reflect, dissect and "interpret" these dreams and wishes. We'll be checking in with you at the **annual meeting on January 23** on what we are hearing and doing. In addition, we are transforming the NCD committee into a group of Transformers! No, we aren't a group of robots in disguise. The new committee, Transformation 2011, will be focused on taking all our dreams and wishes and listen to where the Spirit is guiding us as a congregation. The team will deliver to the Council and Congregation our findings and recommendations this spring.

### **Become a Transformer**

One more vital lesson that I've learned about transformation, as did Joseph, is that we need to do the work. Transformation just doesn't happen. So you are invited to become a Transformer! What does this mean? We all have a part in transforming our congregation. Here are a few ways in which you can support Transformation 2011:

- Pray for CGS, our ministry, our members, the Transformers
- Participate in discussions that will occur over the next few months
- Challenge one another to say "yes, if..."
- Join the Transformation 2011 team

*"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." - Philippians 1:6*



## **Annual Meeting January 23rd**

The congregation's annual meeting will be held in the Great Hall after worship on Sunday, January 23rd, 2011. There are several important items on this meetings agenda:

- presentation of the Annual Report. If you lead one of the congregation's or ministries, please provide your section of the report to church office as soon as possible. In order to reduce costs and impact on the environment, the Annual Report will be available electronically this year. If you do not have internet access and would like a printed copy of the Annual Report, please contact the church office.
- discussion and vote on the proposed operating budget for 2011. Working drafts of the proposal are available online at [http://cgs-plan.home.mindspring.com/2011\\_Budget/](http://cgs-plan.home.mindspring.com/2011_Budget/) This is a challenging budget,

so we would like to be able to incorporate, or at least have text for, any proposed changes before the meeting. Please contact any council member with your proposals.

- election of six people to the nominating committee for a single one-year term. The nominating committee is responsible for identifying people willing to run for council seats next November. If you're interested in serving, please contact a council member.
- election of two lay people (one male, one female) to participate in gatherings of the Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Parish, Synod Assembly, and so on. If you're interested in serving, please contact a council member.
- election of a treasurer. If you're interested in serving, please contact a council member.
- ratification of the constitutional amendment approved at our congregational on June 6th, 2010, moving the election of the treasurer to take place at the same meeting as the election of council members.

With so many important items on the agenda, it's important to work out as many issues in advance of the meeting as possible. If you or someone you know could serve in one of the elected positions, or if you have concerns about the budget proposal, please contact a council member.

*Randy*



## **CGS Finance Ministry**

At its December 19th meeting, the CGS Finance Ministry elected Lewis as its chair for 2011. There were two other decisions of particular note.

First, based on input from other ministries, we agreed to revise the check request form to explicitly require identification of the budget line item. This should improve the accuracy with which expenditures are classified, and may also goad people into actually looking at the budget. Our accountants will provide each ministry with a detailed list of its expenditures and remaining line item balances each month. Secondly, in reviewing our reserve fund allocations based on the reserve fund guidelines adopted a few years ago, it became clear that some of the guidelines are not functioning quite as intended. In the coming months, the Finance Ministry will call a meeting specifically to review the reserve fund guidelines and recommend updates for the council.

This discussion touches on fundamental questions of stewardship and our congregation's priorities, so your thoughts and prayers are needed.

At 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, the CGS Finance Ministry will meet in the CGS Library to discuss proposals for revamping our process for handling reimbursements, check requests, invoices, and so on. Processes should exist to make our lives a little easier, so contact Finance Ministry chair Lewis with your input about what does and does not work well for your ministry.



## **Social Action Update**

Thank you so much for your support of our alternative Christmas gifts from Palestine. We were able to donate \$900 to Lutheran World Federation from the sales of olive oil. This money will go to the Augustana Victoria Hospital which provides a large amount of charity medical care and other projects. We also sold \$525 from The Cave Arts and Crafts. They make traditional handcrafts and provide economic and cultural livelihood for Palestinian women. They are a part of the International Center of Bethlehem started in 1994 as an outreach of Christmas Lutheran Church. It is an ecumenical institution serving the whole community committed to empower and create life in the midst of despair and to continue to call for justice and reconciliation in the midst of violence. I think this project provided for some meaningful Christmas gifts and helped those who made them.

The response in providing gifts for children and food for The Lord's Pantry was wonderful. All the gift tags are off the tree and on December 19 the gifts and food were delivered. They are always grateful for all that they receive. The Lord's Pantry is located at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in east San Jose. They provide food to 500 families in the community for Christmas as well as Christmas gifts for children up to 13 years of age. Many thanks for your generous sharing or your blessings.



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Giving-Sister Synods**

In the month of January, our second mile offerings will be divided among the Sierra Pacific Synod's companion synods: the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, the Lutheran Synod of El Salvador and the Taiwan Lutheran Church. Please keep these churches around the world in your prayers this month and consider an additional offering toward their ministries. The Sierra Pacific Synod is blessed to accompany these churches in mutual ministry as we proclaim God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying activity in all the world.

## **We are overrun with dishes**

Dishes seem to be accumulating once again in the kitchen. Please take a look around and check to see if anything in the kitchen is yours and take it home.



## Recycle Your Christmas Cards

In this day of e-Cards and apps that can do just about anything, it is always wonderful to receive some good, old fashioned cards during the holidays. But what do you do with them after the Christmas Season? Why not be green and recycle them! Bring your Christmas cards, fronts only, to church and place them in the wrapped box on the table by the couch in the lobby. The box will be in the lobby until January 31. The cards will be used for a project in fall 2011. Stay tuned to hear more about that at a later date!



## Wrestling at 9

The "Wrestling with the Word" Bible studies will continue in the church library each Sunday morning from 9:00 to 9:20 through January 16th. In these sessions we:

- chose our texts from the lectionary readings the coming Sunday
- carefully "unpack" the texts, trying to see through fresh eyes
- read the texts aloud, hearing them in different and through different voices
- emphasize finding the resonances between the and our own experience
- read them aloud again, allowing our personal connection to bleed through

If you ever serve as a reader, you may find this process helpful. Even if you have no intention of ever reading in public, you'll find that this process makes you a better listener, and fosters a new kind of relationship with the Word.

Randy



## New Flower Chart for 2011

There is a new sign up chart in the hallway for altar flowers. Please sign up to honor a loved one or to commemorate a special day such as a birthday or anniversary. Flowers are \$35 and may be taken home after the service.

## Special recital by Amelia Johnson-February 5<sup>th</sup>

You are invited to a special recital to be given by Amelia Johnson here at CGS on February 5<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. She is currently in the Music program at San Jose State University and hopes to use this recital as her senior project. She will be singing some pieces in Latin, German and French. Joining her as a special guest will be our own Lucio Ortiz, surely to be a wonderful duet.

## Offering envelopes now available

Offering envelopes for 2011 are ready, be sure to pick up your offering envelopes in the narthex.

## Save the date-February 12

Here at CGS, 2011 will be the year for **joyful opportunity** to be together in community.

Mark your calendars for the first event of 2011-

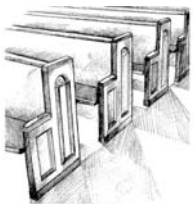
February 12@11am

Luncheon Tea

**"I shall not be moved"**

Invitation        forthcoming

Lent...open to ideas. What are yours? Soup, Song and Sacrifice? Or What? Talk to Pr. Bea, Janet or Esther  
Next calendar planning on January 29. All are welcome!



### News from the Pews **News from the pews**

Ruth Romani, long time member of Christ the Good Shepherd, passed away Saturday, December 11, 2010. Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, and they did not have any children. Ruth has been cared for by her niece Jody Pedersen, and our prayers are with Jody and with her family members and many friends who miss her. May they find peace and comfort.

## German Language Ministry Finds a Home at CGS

Some time ago, the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) made a grant for a German Language Ministry in the San Francisco Bay Area, hosted by Wilfried Glabach and First Congregational Church of San Francisco United Church of Christ (UCC). Pastor Glabach, who has been a guest preacher here at CGS, has returned to Germany. The question naturally arose regarding what to do with the project, currently consisting primarily of a website, <http://evangelisch-sfbayarea.org/>, and its remaining funds, amounting to \$10,487.18

After discussion with the CGS Council and executive committee, it was decided that CGS would make a good home for this ministry. The funds will be on our books and managed as a restricted gift, and will be used to support German Language ministry (church services, pastoral care, and information resources) throughout the Bay Area. An interesting aspect of this grant is its emphasis on younger German immigrants who are at home

both in Germany and California, in both German and English, and who often have non-German-speaking partners or children.

While the church body who made the grant is a federation of Lutherans, Reformed, and United Protestants, all of the churches currently involved are Lutherans, and the German-speaking community it serves is decidedly ecumenical.

Randy Presuhn has taken over as webmaster for the website, and would appreciate feedback and suggestions. As we've seen from the large attendance year after year at our bilingual and German-only offerings, as well as the flourishing children's singing circles meeting at CGS, we're in a good position to help address this community's needs.

Randy



My name is Suzanne Barnes. I've been worshipping at CGS and becoming active in the congregation. I'd like to tell you about WELCA in hopes of inspiring some of you to begin a CGS WELCA chapter. We have the backing of Pastor Bea and I observe we have many wonderful women who would enjoy such a program.

I have been an active member of the women of the ELCA, WELCA, at every church attended. The WELCA focus is sisterhood, growth of women in Christ while serving others less fortunate. It is a national organization offering structure to chapters for example, by providing a suggested constitution. There are also local, regional, and national WELCA conferences which one may attend as an official elected all expenses paid delegate or as a participant. The triennial conference is 14-17 July in Spokane, WA.

A typical church chapter meeting is conducted monthly/bimonthly after Sunday service starting with a simple soup/bread meal with a program about a member's volunteer efforts saving cleft palate babies in China. Another has been after taco salad preparing layettes to send to national headquarters for shipment to Tanzania. There were some bunko nights at member's homes. When I was WELCA president at another church, I organized a women's overnight in the sanctuary. We had Chinese takeout, played 'spoons,' went for a nighttime hike, came back to our sleeping bags, watched 'Moonstruck,' and woke up the next morning to a nice breakfast. Every woman in the congregation participated!

Suzanne Barnes