

The Witness of Peace

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2012

War On Christmas

“Pastor, what does this church have against Christmas hymns?” It’s a question asked every year by someone in the congregation. Such people are sincere and want the church to conform to the rest of society that shoves itself away from the Thanksgiving table to race off to the Black Friday shopping lines.

“We have nothing against Christmas hymns, “ I answered. ‘But it’s not Christmas, yet. Tell me, what have you got against Advent?’”

“But I like my Christmas hymns.”

“I do as well, but we’re in Advent. It’s time for repentance and reflection before Christmas. We don’t sing our Easter hymns during Lent, do we?”

The war on Christmas isn’t what the media says it is: Saying *Happy Holidays* instead of *Merry Christmas*, e-mailed outrage over false reports of our president banishing the use of the words *Christmas tree*, *hymns* supposedly being forbidden in classrooms. With all the righteous indignation our media stirs up over a perceived war on Christmas, the true war on Christmas begins every year on December 26th, *and we Christians are the first to lead the charge.*

Christmas only *begins* on the 25th. The celebration of this feast is supposed to last for 12 days but doesn’t for most Christians. Often we don’t even celebrate the day of Christ’s Birth if it falls on a weekday, preferring to attend the Christmas Eve service and devote Christmas Day to Santa. Every seven years when Christmas actually falls on a Sunday and worship is scheduled, the attendance is usually very light. The Sunday after Christmas Day has long been referred to as Cannon Sunday—as in you can shoot a cannon through the church and not hit a soul. That Sunday is when we sing those longed-for hymns because it is a Christmas Sunday, though someone once told me by then they are a little sick of the Christmas hymns.

We Christians will join the world in dropping *Merry Christmas* from our vocabulary on the 26th. *Happy New Year*, we say, even though it is still Christmas until January 6th. And those Christmas trees will come down in many households sometime between the *Two Turtle Doves* and the *Five Gold Rings*. They are too dry from having been decorated early in Advent. Yes, there is a war on Christmas, but it’s not the one people think it is.

Christmas is about God becoming flesh. God became one of us. The creator entered his own creation to be with us, to transform our lives, and to save us from ourselves. He came to put an end to the war we declared on him in the garden and have waged daily ever since through our sins. He came to give us a gift, a promise of salvation through this...child. God announced in Jesus, *I am here to transform the world.* He didn’t come so that people would say *Christmas* instead of *holiday*, and he certainly didn’t come to establish after-Christmas sales (which all occur during Christmas). He came so that we would reflect, repent, return and reunite with our creator. He came so that after his birth--for a good long time after--his creation would break into hymns and songs of praise.

We have led the war on Christmas. We can lead the resistance. Claim back the eleven days we have abandoned. Celebrate the gift of Jesus from the *Partridge in a Pear Tree* until the last of the *Twelve Drummers Drum*. If people think you’re nuts, look them in the eye and say, *What have you got against Christmas?* Merry Christmas to you all!

Pastor Jeff

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in Action

The following emails came through the church office this past month and Debra wanted to share with you some of the things going on in our Synod as well as the Churchwide ELCA!

November 17 Appeal From Rev. Jerry Buss, Director for Evangelical Mission:

Have you seen the news coverage of moms and their children sleeping in tents at “Nickelsville” in Seattle? Two weeks ago the children spoke of being cold. The temperatures have become much colder since then. As the state cut Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the number of apartment evictions has grown right at the coldest time of the year.

This situation is not acceptable to the people of God. In January 2012 the city of Seattle will release \$500,000 to help provide housing for families. But there are 38 cold nights between thanksgiving Day through the end of 2011.

For \$10,000 Mary’s Place in downtown Seattle can provide oversight shelter for those 38 days to many of the families living in tents. The cost to provide housing is \$300 per day. I’m looking for 37 partners to each pledge \$300 to provide this family housing for the period already mentioned. My wife and I will provide the 38th \$300 through our congregation, The Church of Steadfast Love.

Response to above email:

Ten families that include over 30 children have been housed the whole month of December because of donations from ELCA congregations and individuals. Some of the families will be able to stay in this housing through January. Why? Because the appeal asked for \$10,000 but nearly \$20,000 was received. Thanks be to God! Well over 100 people representing at least 25 of our synod congregations contributed to this appeal.



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted the vital work of Lutheran social ministry organizations in welcoming refugees to the United States, during her December 7 address at the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugee’s ministerial conference in Geneva.

In her presentation to world leaders, Clinton shared a story about Fatuma Elmi, who applied for asylum in the United State after civil war broke out in her native Somalia in 1991. Settled in Minneapolis, Elmi has worked as an employment counselor at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota for the past 17 years. She has been able to find jobs for 79 percent of her clients this year, despite the difficult economy.

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota is an affiliated ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, along with 285 other social ministry organizations across the country. ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark A. Hanson said he appreciates Clinton’s sharing of Elmi’s story and the recognition of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, particularly “on this historic occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention in a gathering of world leaders.”

“This is who we are as the ELCA. Many are descendants of a once immigrant people, and others of those who came as slaves. Together we are now participating in God’s work of restoring and reconciling communities by welcoming refugees and working towards fair and just immigration reform.”

Peace Lutheran Mission Statement

Called by Christ to love our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, Peace Lutheran Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, offers help, hope, and healing to all in need.

Scripture Texts For January

January 1	First Sunday of Christmas
First Reading	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm	Psalm 148
Second Reading	Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel Reading	Luke 2:22-40
January 8	Baptism of Our Lord
First Reading	Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm	Psalm 29
Second Reading	Acts 19:1-7
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:4-11
January 15	Second Sunday After Epiphany
First Reading	1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)
Psalm	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel Reading	John 1:43-51
January 22	Third Sunday After Epiphany
First Reading	Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm	Psalm 62:5-12
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:14-20
January 29	Fourth Sunday After Epiphany
First Reading	Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm	Psalm 111
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:21-28



PLC Council

President: Ernie Fosse	652-0246
(ernie@cedarcomm.com)	
Vice-President: Pedro Gonzales	425-268-3058
(pgonza888@aol.com)	
Treasurer: Kathy Rasmussen	425-259-5854
Secretary: Sunny Moyer	653-7785
(sun1114@aol.com)	
Mike Cairus	474-1952
Coni Moyer	653-7785
(mgr8estmom@aol.com)	
George Daoura	652-6501
Robyn Canteras	654-1866
(k6eycrobins@gmail.com)	
Larry Sather	629-3816
Cheri Gonzales	425-232-2821
PLCW Rep: Jolene Rod	629-3656
Youth Rep: Zachary Keefe	360-435-2056
Youth Rep: Cody Hoffmeister	425-346-3640
Staff	
Pastor: Jeff Driscoll	435-3104
(gnesio@hotmail.com)	
Parish Worker: Debra Compton	425-231-2356
(Debbers54@aol.com)	
Youth & Family: Mary Fuentes	652-8694
(mjfsilvana@hotmail.com)	
Musicians:	
Pam Holdal	629-4263
(wynn.holdal@yahoo.com)	
Randy Libby	425-218-5178
Delaney Scott w/Voices of Peace	
Custodian: Sue Ludwig	435-5536
Nursery Supervisor: Ashley Stoffel	652-8176

Peace Lutheran Council: November 21, 2011

Members present: Joe Holden, Coni Moyer, Ashley Stoffel, Ernie Fosse, Sunny Moyer, Robyn Cantares, Pastor Jeff Driscoll, Jesse Driscoll, Donna Hefty, Pedro Gonzales

Members absent: Kathy Rasmussen, Mike Carius, George Daoura

Call to order by President Ernie Fosse at 7:02pm

Pastor's report given by Jeff

- Stephen ministry has been suspended
- Adult confirmation has ended
- Focusing on holidays

Communications by Sunny

- Sorry for minutes not being available at this meeting
- Thank you from PLU

Bi-annual Meeting Unpacking

- Mary will be asked to write something up for the mission trip by our next bi-annual meeting
- Task force is almost in place for LWCH (both churches)
- Spencer's Question: The parsonage was once income for the church why can it not remain income?
- Mission statement will be in bulletin for awhile
- Like Al's statement that the budget presented is a guideline rather than a budget
- New members next month: bring goodies

Other items:

- Nursery Coverage for December 11
- Christmas party: Jesse has music taken care of, Al & Judy have decorations taken care of
- We need a lighted reader board

Adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Submitted by: Sunny Moyer, Council Secretary

Sunday School News

Yippy—it's a Snow Day! Yes, the Sunday School already knows when there will be a Snow Day. Mark your calendars for January 22 when there will be one service at 10:00 AM. If you hadn't noticed, we didn't have a December Christmas program. After much discussion the teachers voted to have the program in January. The program will incorporate Christmas, Epiphany and a preamble to Lent. This should be a lot of fun and we hope to see you at our guaranteed Snow Day!

Sunday School Staff

Grief Care

A Prayer

Bless those who hunger,
may they be fed.

Bless those who are sorrowful,
may they be uplifted.

Bless those who are lonely;
may they be encircled.

Bless those who have died;
may they be remembered.

Bless those who mourn;
may they become whole.

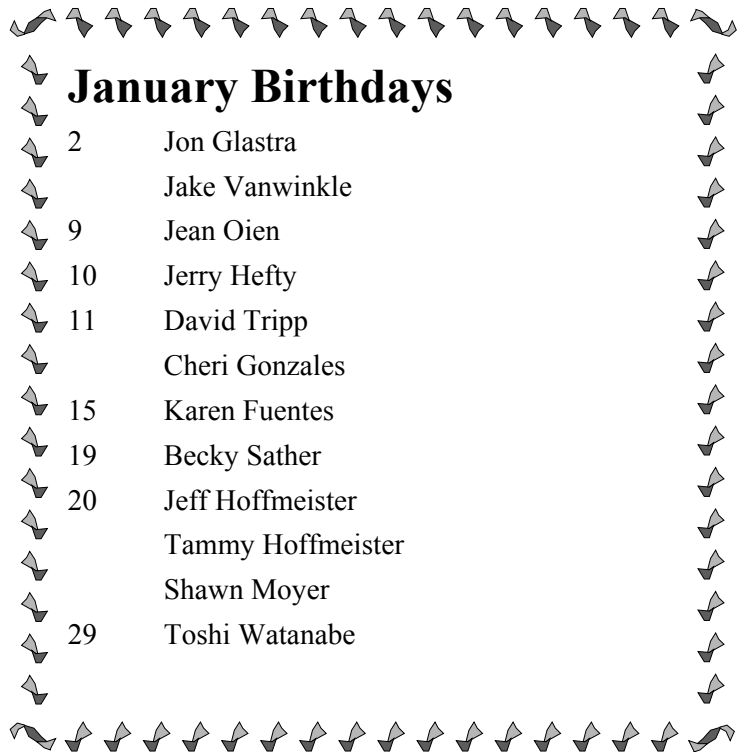
Bless the dying ones, the sick ones
and the crying ones;
may they see the light.

Bless us who are here this day;
may we be a blessing to others.
Bless the sunrise;
may it be a beacon of new life and hope.

Bless the clouds,
and their portent of refreshing rain.

Bless us into eternity,
until we meet again. Amen.

(Author Unknown)



January Birthdays

2	Jon Glastra
	Jake Vanwinkle
9	Jean Oien
10	Jerry Hefty
11	David Tripp
	Cheri Gonzales
15	Karen Fuentes
19	Becky Sather
20	Jeff Hoffmeister
	Tammy Hoffmeister
	Shawn Moyer
29	Toshi Watanabe

Prayer Corner

Church: ELCA, Maasae Lutheran Girl's School

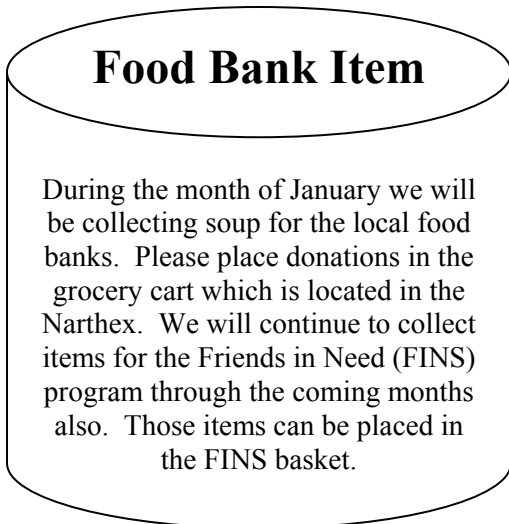
Military: Nichole Moman (Iraq)

Continued Care: Selvin Stensen, Dorothy Madson, Doris Ohde, Sharon Daoura, Sandi Nysether, Randy Libby, Jyoti Mutschler, Darlene Crouch, Dennis Whitney, Rob Delbrauk, Peggy Parker, John Gedstad, Grace Dahline, Jenny Burgess, Carol Ronken, Hazel Allen, Dolly Pachur, Alice Jacobs, Audrey Carlson, Brent Beard, Leilani Erps, Judy Bressler, Nate Maher, Renae Cupic, Cille Krock, George Burlingame, Paul Jellen, Jr.



Go Green Tip

Save all those bags, fold all that paper, roll up all that ribbon and use it next year to wrap your Christmas presents!



Food Bank Item

During the month of January we will be collecting soup for the local food banks. Please place donations in the grocery cart which is located in the Narthex. We will continue to collect items for the Friends in Need (FINS) program through the coming months also. Those items can be placed in the FINS basket.

Stories of Faith in Action

Joining the Conversation about Scripture!

When the Rev. Laura Barbins asks new members why they've chosen to join Celebration Lutheran Church, Chardon, Ohio, she often hears the same answer, "Because the Bible is at the center of what you do."

Pastor Barbins is delighted by that response, but admits, "I'm not sure that would have been as evident before we implemented the Book of Faith Initiative. Those comments are a nice affirmation of what we are doing."



Book of Faith, an initiative of the ELCA, encourages members to deepen their knowledge about Scripture through study and conversation. This five-year collaborative program was launched in 2008 and leads up to the ELCA's 25th anniversary in 2012.

Celebration is one of 100 congregations in the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod who are participating in the Book of Faith Initiative, according to Karen Kaufman, the synod's resource center director.

The impact of the Initiative on the congregation hasn't gone unnoticed by member Paul Gochnour. "As a lifelong Lutheran, I haven't always seen a lot of Lutherans walking into church carrying their Bibles," Paul said. "Book of Faith has brought the Bible more into focus for people (at Celebration), myself included."

Paul has enjoyed the interesting conversations spurred by doing the daily journaling exercise with his wife, Vickie. "Sometimes we found completely different themes or messages in the same passage," Paul marvels. "It's (eye-opening) to see someone else's point of view (on Scripture)."

Taking the time to immerse himself in the Bible also has shed new light on the familiar, Paul says. "When you sit quietly and meditate on a passage, you gain new insights. The Scriptures come alive." And it's fun, as testified by the laughter they often share together.

Lutheran World Relief

I want to share Mary's experience with you. I was so happy. Last Thursday at the Gathering Place Mary had brought quilts. A man told her he was from the Christmas Tree House in Stanwood and they were out of quilts and expecting about 60 more families to come the following day. Mary gave him the 4 quilts she had in her car and told him she had more coming. She told him she would deliver what we had at church the following day. There were about 40 quilts that she delivered on Friday and they already had 50 families waiting. Someone else brought in 7 quilts. The Christmas Tree House has been open 2 or 3 years—it's a house that was donated to Josephine and Our Savior's Church. Someone had it renovated so it could be used. All donations are greatly appreciated. The families that come there get to pick one Christmas gift for each of their children so we also sent down some stuffed toys that Shirley had left at the church for us to distribute. Thank you everyone!

As you can see there is lots of need! We're down to 5 quilts now so we have to really get our machines humming. Thanks to Lana for picking up quilt tops from Elsie when she delivered cookies. Many hands make the work lighter for all. We won't have many quilts for LWR but we have given well over 100 locally.

Please contact me if you have time to help on Thursday mornings! There is a great need with many things to do besides sewing. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all.

Donna Hefty, LWR Coordinator

Christmas Greeting from the Central Deanery of the EL CER

(this is just a segment of the Christmas letter from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia)

They were waiting for a royal Savior in Old Israel: a hero on a stallion who was going to save his people. But what happened? The Savior was born and he was in fact, a little baby in swaddling cloth in a manger! Later, when Jesus became older, he preached: "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches." (Luke 13:19)

"This is a glad news for all and for the Central Deanery of the ELC ER. This is a sign that all our works won't be in vain. God changes the small into the blessed, that is why we go on, in spite of all our fears. The congregations of the Deanery are scattered, there are no permanent worship places, and where there is a church, it should be restored. But we go on.

In Stary Oskol Lutherans gather in apartments: sometimes here, sometimes there, however, they don't lose hope, the congregation has a number of ministries. There is a visitation ministry, a society of political victim (an initiative of the congregation), Christian holidays in the sports school, where Pastor Matukh has his second job, and a regular confirmation class. The congregation lives.

In Jaroslavl there is a church, which already belongs to the congregation, but it is a ruin which bears sad traces of the tragic 20th century. The congregation has started to reconstruct the church, and in the next year when it is warmer, they plan to restore the windows, and the church won't be a ruin any more. Slowly, but still, step by step. They are revitalizing the pastoral ministry at present. The congregations lives.

In Orel, there is a congregation, which is led by preacher Penner. It is a modest congregation, but it was the first one in the Deanery to start preparation for the new synod meeting of the ELC ER. In Orel there is a Lutheran chapel. The congregation lives.

And we have Lutheran groups, which have nothing to boast of; no buildings, no big numbers of people, no special events, in Tula, Kostroma, Kinesma, Balabanova, but they live. They meet for a recreation in Uslovaya each year and invite preachers for Bible studies. They live. And our main task is to keep this fragile life, this green twig in cold winter, alive.

We thank all our friends who support us. We thank Eva Mader and all our sisters and brothers from the Northwestern Synod in the USA for their indefatigable help! We thank Emmaus German Embassy congregation in Moscow and everybody who have prayed for us! Together and with God's help we will revive the Central Deanery. I wish you blessed Christmas a happy new year!

Yours in Christ,

Elena Bondarenko, Acting Dean of Central Deanery

Guatemala Service Trip

Right now we are planning and working out the logistics for traveling to a foreign country. A few of the team members still be passports and all of us will be getting a couple of shots. Some of us have already requested vacation time and some are still mulling over the idea of going!

Currently there are ten team members and as mentioned, we have a few people who are still checking schedules to see if they can go. If you happen to be one of those who have been contemplating if this is the God's plan for you then please contact me for information. We will be having our next team meeting on Wednesday, January 4 at 6:30 pm.

Mary, Larry, Amanda, Andi, JoDonna, Tammy, Jeff,
Cody, Ashley and Danielle

January 2012 Faith and Care

8:30 Service at PLC

January 1 & 29

January 8 & 22

Head Usher	Pedro Gonzales	Joe Johns
Usher	Lori Palicte	Sheri Johns
Greeter	Danielle Field	Jeanne Watanabe
Lector	Bonnie Fuentes	Jerry Hefty
Acolyte	Kenji Watanabe (no 1st)	Kenji Watanabe
Communion		Jeanne Watanabe
Serving Group (Fellowship)	Betty Jacobs Serving Group	Betty Jacobs Serving Group

11:00 Service at PLC

January 1 & 29

January 8 & 22

Head Usher	Jon Glastra	Jon Glastra
Usher	Tammy Hoffmeister	Linda Staswick
Greeter	Cody Hoffmeister	Ruth Schei
Lector	Linda Anderson	Jon Glastra
Acolyte	Jody Hoffmeister	Magnus Cairus
Communion	Coni Moyer	
Serving Group (Fellowship)	Mary Fuentes Serving Group	Mary Fuentes Serving Group

January 22 (one service at 10:00 AM—Children's Sunday School Program)

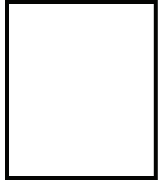
Head Usher: Debra Compton

Youth will fill all Faith and Care positions!



Peace Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 100 (1717 Larson Road)
Silvana, WA 98287



Pastor: Jeff Driscoll

Parish Worker: Debra Compton

Youth & Family Worker: Mary J Fuentes

January Worship Schedule

8:30 A.M. Early Service at Peace
9:45 am Sunday School—All Ages
11:00 A.M. Second Service at Peace

Telephone: 360-652-8739

Email: PLSilvana@aol.com

Web Site: www.plsilvana.org

Bits and Pieces

- Naomi Circle just distributed their mission offerings of over \$1200: they included money to the Massae Lutheran Girls Secondary School, monies for Lutheran World Relief health kits, money for military families and several other programs. The Circle will continue to support programs that the Lord lays on their hearts.
- Did you know that the youth group recently took the bus and went caroling at different members homes and care centers. From preschoolers to high schoolers, a good time was had by all!
- There was an article in the Everett Herald recently about the Dietary Manager at Josephine Sunset Home. The piece reported that the manager knows her grub and customers at Stanwood's Josephine home! To view the article go to: <http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20111214/NEWS01/712149923>
- Our church directory proof just came back and as soon as we can check it for any corrections it will be sent in and the directories should be back soon.
- While you are web browsing don't forget that Peace Lutheran sermons are online at the following address: <http://www.plsilvana.org/Worship.htm>. Many thanks to Dave Tripp for keeping the site up to date. You can also Friend us on Facebook at Peace Lutheran Church!
- Are you a Thrivent Financial for Lutherans member? If so, you may have Thrivent Choice dollars to designate to a charity of your choice. Peace Lutheran has gratefully been the recipient of Choice dollars from several members! Not sure if you have monies available for you to donate? Come into the office and Debra will help you find out!
- Speaking of dollars!!!! The Simply Giving program has grown this year with more and more members signing up. It is a simple process to make sure that your tithe/offering is disbursed each month. You set the amount, the date and they will do the rest. Peace Lutheran receives a copy of each deposit and who the contributor is. By the way, if you choose to use your credit card (making sure to pay it off each month ☺) you can also earn airplane miles!
- And now, the Editor wishes each of you the merriest of Christmases and all good things to each of you this next year. Thank you for your prayers and support this past year—Rick and I are looking forward to a healthier 2012!