

Pastoral Ponderings

By Pastor John Beck

St. Timothy Lutheran is not a large congregation. Yet when you make a list of all the activities, events, programs, services, ministries, relationships, and projects happening within the walls and hearts of our people, it is quite a list. I have not tried in this review to be exhaustive. Some people/projects/events will be missed. Sorry. But I get goosebumps when I see all the effort and energy that you have offered to support Christ's ministry through our congregation.

Our Ministries Matured

The chance to involve Lutheran staff in VBS allowed us to add a program component that included folks from local group homes. We dove-tailed VBS with the church picnic and a wonderful afternoon brought new friends and neighbors over for good food, games, and super singing led by Bernice Bramon. Under the leadership of Parish Nurse Karen Kohl and the Health Ministry Team a number of projects took

shape and the LEMs (Lay Eucharistic Ministers) were consecrated. Our contribution to the Friday Food Bank grew as new teams stepped up to help. In its second year, our Parish Garden, under the watchful spade of Gary Biornstad, added more hands as folks stepped up to water, weed, and harvest. Perhaps one of our more challenging ministries, allowing occasional overnight guests on the property, helped us have important conversation about the balance between mercy and justice. We celebrated with Julius Olomua and Ricky Sam on their "Yes to Baptism" in their confirmation. With an eye to 2010 we continued to look for ways to support and partner with Good Spirit. Joining them for part of their Christmas Communion was a special time. Since 2007 the ELCA has supported Good Spirit with grants of \$25,000, \$18,000, and \$15,000. In 2010 their support will be \$10,000. So Pastor Chuck is looking for mission partners to raise the other \$15,000 needed each year for Good Spirit's future. Finally, this year we have formalized a process of providing small micro-credit loans to members of the community who face crisis.

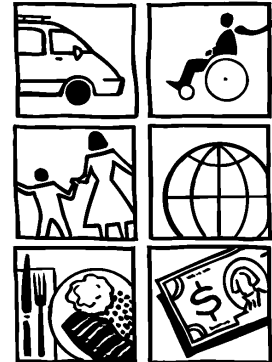
Our projects

This year Karen Burger-Kimber and Shannon Holley have stepped up to help Greta Christensen develop a St. Timothy cookbook. The Fireside Room remodel was completed in December. Gary Biornstad has done an amazing job laying floor, painting walls, installing trim, adding walls, and installing a gas fireplace with tile façade and beautiful mantle. We can heat the room separately with the fireplace, and Irene Borchers and others have provided wonderful new furniture. We will dedicate the room in January. This year we also finished the restoration of the west parking lot and it was top-coated in October just before the rain began. We will stripe it in the spring. An unexpected project involved major repair to our elevator and again, Gary Biornstad guided the work.

Our relationships within and without

Our congregation thrives because we understand relationships are what our faith is all about. That means bearing the loss which death and departures bring. We have mourned many this year (Willy, Lesi and Ruth, and others). We have also made new friends and watched our community grow as new members have been added to our ranks. Our relationships have reached out into the community as a Small Neighborhood Grant (funded through East Portland

Serving



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Neighborhood Office) linked us with Portland State students to canvass over 600 homes near the church. This grant also brought cultural competency training to St. Timothy in December, and some new multi-lingual signage to help guests feel welcome. Our Fellowship Committee, led by Jean Whitford, continued to provide beautiful settings and ample food for the events of the congregation. Similarly, our Percolators extended our hospitality to first-time worshippers with a visit and a few cookies that often bring the visitor back for more.

Our organization

Our administrative functioning improved markedly. For several months this year we were able to have a volunteer in the office Monday through Friday. We thank Barb Vecsi, Elaine Scott, Shannon Holley, Annette Biornstad, and Hummingbird Slates for their hard work. There was an amazing blitz day when Annette Biornstad led us into the creation of the St. Timothy Archives. In response to Willy Leemans's declining health, Betty Canham took on building coordination. Irene Borchers has brought energy and passion to reinvigoration of the Property Committee.

My passion for ministry

I know I am loved by a gracious God through Jesus Christ, not because of anything I have done. And I want to share that good news, and I want our congregation to continue to share that good news as we grow and mature as a community of welcoming, forgiven sinners. We have experienced tremendous growth as a diverse, welcoming community in the last 10 years. We also have matured in our infra-structure and involvement of members in leadership and ministry. For our continued future we also need to grow in prayer life and study of scriptures and in our ability to invite friends and neighbors to worship. I will attempt to take leadership in these areas and invite you to consider steps that I believe are necessary if we want St. Timothy to exist in 20 years. Clearly there are small, declining protestant congregation that can "hang on" for a few more years, especially with part-time clergy. But I believe God is calling us to be a thriving ministry center in this SE Portland neighborhood. To thrive will require us to take on some new ways of being the church.

Toward that end I want to share how and why I am taking a pay decrease in 2010. Clearly there is not a lot of fat in our budget. I congratulate the Council and Treasurer, Don Weber, for having spirited, mature shalom-based conversations as they sought to line up the numbers.

I believe that a congregation's giving patterns (what we give away) is the primary determining indicator of its future direction. As such, I believe that part of the reason we have plateaued in worship attendance is our plateaued benevolent giving. So I challenged the Council to increase our giving to benevolence, taking it from my salary, and that in combination with other needs, bringing a \$3,000 decrease in my package. The Council included a caveat that if we have the money at the end of the year, I will receive it. In these days of financial challenges I am willing to live with decreases, like so many of our folks who are unemployed or under-employed. And given the heart episode of 18 months ago, I am glad to have a congregation where I am able to work $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and continue to try and develop heart-healthy living habits.

Congratulations

Finally I commend the congregation for paying off the building mortgage. This is a significant step and because this \$ 12,000 expense will be missing from the budget, we are better able to navigate rough economic waters

Several leaders put in an incredible amount of time and effort keeping things moving forward at St. Timothy. Huge amounts of time were offered to the church by President Ray and Vice-President Betty, Treasurer Don and Financial Secretary Fran. Their work is very time-intensive and time sensitive. Jean, filling in as Council secretary and general organizer, newsletter editor, and weekly bulletin production officer was also very busy. Frances Carpenter kept communion coming each week. And the list goes on and on. Elenore helped reorganize the prayer chain; lots of folks spend part of their Sunday morning helping things work as ushers, video/sound techs, choir members, assisting minister, acolytes, readers, communion preparers, and coffee makers. Gary Shannon continues to thrill me with his spirited, creative and engaging approach to praising God with music.

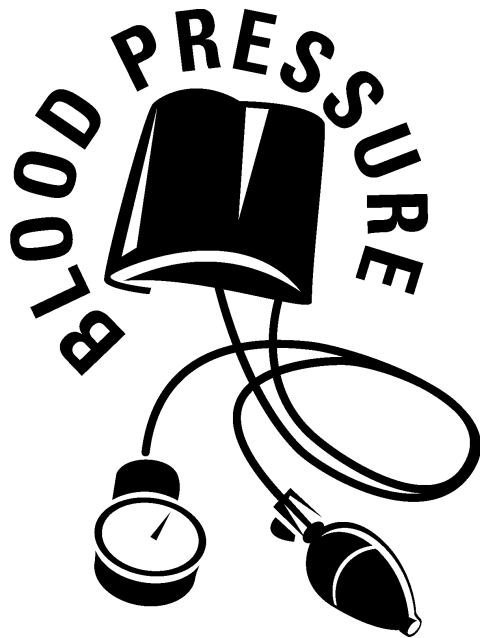
GOD
is our
REFUGE
&
STRENGTH,
an ever-present
HELP
in trouble.

PSALM 46:1

Health Matters

The next meeting for the Health Ministry Team is on January 25 at 7 pm. They are one of the most active groups at St. Timothy. Sherry and Karen are working on the Annual Report for 2009. See how many projects they do in a year!

Keep your blood pressure in mind and to help in this you can get a reading from the Health Ministry Team, especially at the coffee hours every first Sunday at St. Timothy.



Global Mission Event

The Oregon Synod 2010 Global Mission Event will be held Saturday, February 6, at Milwaukie Lutheran Church, Milwaukie, from 9 am to 3:15 pm. The speaker will be Anne Basye, author of "Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal". Breakout groups include: Social and economic choices we must make, Jeff Peterson, Ph.D., Linfield College; Muslim authority, Pastor Don Cornell; years in Pakistan as a nurse, Jan Kearsgard; plus stories of Poland, Nicaragua, refugee resettlement, Buddhism and hunger projects. Check out many Fair Trade items. Come, gather to be inspired to think globally in order to become active locally.

Your editor has attended several of the GME gatherings and enjoyed every one. They have child care and a big youth focus, too. This one is in Portland, so travel will be easier. Peggy Jefferies, our former Parish Nurse, often attends as well. There is no charge, but a free will offering for the lunch is taken. Just a warning: the Fair Trade chocolate is hard resist. This year we are invited to take donations for buying anti-malarial nets in Africa. The address is
Milwaukie Lutheran Church
3820 SE Lake Rd.
(Exit 99-E (McLoughlin Blvd) in Milwaukie at Washington St., Right on Main to Lake)

St. Timothy Lutheran Church's Annual Congregational Meeting

Will be held
after church services
at about 11:30 a.m. on
January 10, 2010

A potluck lunch
will follow the meeting.
If the meeting is postponed
due to extreme weather,
it will be moved to
January 17, 2010.



Choirs Sing!

East county church choirs have been sharing their talents and time with us for 8 years in a continuing benefit for the Daybreak Shelter. The Epiphany Choir Fest will be on January 10 at 3 pm. Gethsemane Lutheran Church at 11560 SE Market will be the host this year. Gary Shannon and our choir will be performing some of their favorites and singing the 'Hallelujah Chorus' in the combined choir. The event is free, and a good will offering will be accepted on behalf of Human Solutions' Daybreak Shelter Network.

The Portland Tribune recently had an article on the Daybreak Shelter Network. Every area of the city has grass roots level approaches to helping the homeless. In East county, the Daybreak Shelter uses the resources of many churches. By each taking in families for a week in rotation, the nine core churches of the Network provide a transition for families from living on the streets to living in secure housing. St. Timothy takes a supper to Gethsemane when they are the host church. Barb Vecsi is our contact for this mission. Human Solutions oversees the day to day and the long range planning for each family.


If you would like to go to the Choir Fest, but would rather not drive, we will try to have a list of volunteer drivers who can help.



There was a sad looking rocker in the nursery downstairs. Don Severson took it in hand and now it looks great! Thank you, Don, for your repairs and re-finishing on this project.

Thanks so much to all those who helped with our Christmas tree ministry. Your graciousness is wonderful. If you didn't get a chance to give before, gifts are still accepted. One tree is for Good Spirit, which is seeking to develop Mission Partners. Another tree will bring socks and mittens to homeless folks. A third tree will help with several of the maintenance projects in store for us as the new property committee gets off the ground.

January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2
3 9:15 Choir Practice 10 am Worship Coffee Hour Forum on Future Bible Class Organizing Blood Pressure Screening	4 11 am to 2 pm Census	5 1 pm Fellowship Committee Meeting	6	7 7 pm Choir Practice	8 9 am Welcome to Food Bank	9 10 am Set up for potluck on Sunday
10 9:15 Choir Practice 10 am Worship Annual Meeting & Potluck  3 pm Choir Fest at Gethsemane Lutheran Church	11	12 7 pm Church Council Meeting	13	14 6:30 pm Good Spirit Gathering 7 pm Choir Practice	15 9 am Welcome to Food Bank	16 9:30 am Book of Faith Workshop at Gethsemane 10 am ELSIES Women's Bible study & meeting
17 Food Drive Sunday 9:15 Choir Practice 10 am Worship	18	19 11 am to 2 pm Census	20	21 7 pm Choir Practice	22 9 am Welcome to Food Bank	23
24 9:15 Choir Practice 10 am Worship	25 7 pm Health Ministry Team meeting	26 Newsletter articles due	27	28 7 pm Choir Practice	29 Newsletter printing	30
31 9:15 Choir Practice 10 am Worship 5th Sunday Offering for Project Heat	<p style="text-align: center;">Our January 3 coffee hour will have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chance to discuss the upcoming Annual Meeting • Picking study materials, dates, times, etc., for Bible Study this quarter • Health Ministry Teams' information and blood pressure screening 					

Worship Ministry Schedule for January 2010

	January 3	January 10	January 17	January 24	January 31
Table	Ray Whitford	Dorothy Clark	Sherry Willmschen	Tim Henderson	Ray Whitford
Lector	Betty Caramella	Don Weber	Dorian Willmschen	Vivian Derry	Barb Vecsi
Acolyte	Rickson Sam	John Burplehaus	Ato Ta'ale	Rickson Sam	John Burplehaus
Greeter	Grace Derschmidt	Vivian Derry	Elenore Keller	Greta Christensen	Clyde Dunbar
Usher #1	Pat Burg	Steve Tobias	Greta Christensen	Mike Tokstad	Allen Perhus
Usher	Gary Markwart	LeAnn Tobias	Grace Derschmidt	Pam Tokstad	Don Severson
Video	Clyde Dunbar	Ray Whitford	Dorian Willmschen	Clyde Dunbar	Ray Whitford
Tiny Tims					
Announcer	Hannah Ta'ale	Fran Warner	John Beck	Ray Whitford	Cathy Henderson
Counters		Jean & Teddy	Fran & Deanna		Tim Henderson
Lockup	Ray Whitford	Jean Whitford	Ray Whitford	Jean Whitford	Ray Whitford

Care Coordinators from the Health Ministry Team

Plant Care for January is by Teddy Whitford

Worship Volunteers Gather on March 7 at Coffee Hour

The volunteers for our Sunday services will meet at the coffee hour on March 7 to complete the sign up for the 2nd quarter, April, May, and June of 2010. The sign up sheet will be in the office until March 7. If you would like to start a volunteer job with these great people, contact Pastor Beck, Jean Whitford, or Frances Carpenter, the communion preparation coordinator. If you would like to help with Tiny Tims, our worship time class for youngsters, contact Karen Kohl or Lisa Sanders.

Worship Planning for Lent and Easter Warms Up on February 7

It may be cold and rainy outside, but at the February 7 coffee hour we will look to a bright spring. Since Ash Wednesday comes on February 17, there will be lots to think about for the Lenten and Easter seasons. If you have any ideas or wishes for how the celebrations, evening gatherings, and worship services can be enhanced, please bring them to the February 7 coffee hour or leave a description of your ideas at the office.



Birthdays

January

- 2. Bernice Bramon
Don Severson
- 6. Gene Knudson
- 7. Tiffany Allen
Nathan Strojan
- 10. Alexis Carpenter
- 12. Aaron Burg
- 13. William Billings
- 14. Gary Shannon
- 15. Miriam Kling
Jacklyn Steinmetz
- 17. Robert Sterling
- 20. Carol Bitz
- 21. Olivia Schiffer
Sandra Steinmetz
- 23. Mark Holan
- 25. Adam Markell
Jarame Arney
- 27. Laura Thoreen
Paul Beck
- 29. Kerry Clayton
- 30. Karen Kohl
Anthony Arney
- 31. Clyde Dunbar
Rita Mahoney

Book of Faith Workshop Comes to East Portland

**Gethsemane Lutheran Church
11560 SE Market St, Portland
January 16**

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

An exciting Book of Faith workshop with ELCA Book of Faith Director Dr. Diane Jacobson. Designed for everyone and anyone with a love for the Scriptures, this event is paid for by a grant from the ELCA. Please be our guest!

www.oregonsynod.org/bookoffaith/openbookoffaith.htm

(Book of Faith is a focus on studying the Scriptures sponsored by and supported throughout the ELCA.)

ONSM Speaking at St. Timothy

The Oregon New Sanctuary Movement (ONSM) is an interfaith coalition of over 20 different faith communities, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States.

Oregon New Sanctuary Movement will be at our February 14 Worship Service

Foot of the Stairs Food Pantry Needs Workers

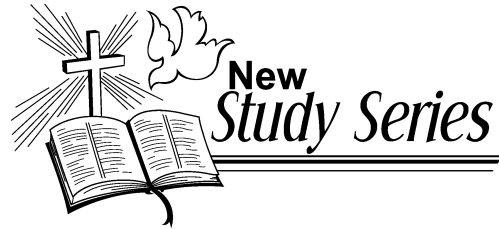
We have several bags of food items to share with St. Timothy families in need, but no plan for distribution set up. Could you help plan or work on this project? Contact Jean Whitford at 503-761-8241.



Bible Study for Winter, But Which One?

Crossways International has several short and long courses available for Bible study. In 2009 we used See Through the Scriptures, which has many lessons available, more than we could do in 8 weeks. Here are the other courses:

- The Biblical Tell-Tale Time-Line
- Christmas: The Real Story
- Apostles' Creed for the New Millennium
- Praying like Jesus the Messiah
- In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?
- Road to Coronation
- The Parables of Jesus



We can gather at the January 3 coffee hour and look through the possibilities. We could get 6 or 8 weeks of study in by the time Easter arrives in April. The decision for the class could be done at the potluck on January 10.



**St. Timothy Lutheran Church
14500 SE Powell Blvd
Portland OR 97236**

Address Correction Requested

**January
2010**

