

Bethlehem Star

"Connecting People to Jesus"

January 2020

Dear Members and Friends,

During the Epiphany Season we are going to focus on a series called the Gospel DNA. The presentations we will be using were first delivered at the Northwest District Convention last year. They focus on the mission of the church by looking at our heritage in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and how we grew as a church from 1847 – 1947. During that period we planted 1 church a week for 100 years. That is 5,200 churches.

Our Lord has given a command: **"Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything, I have commanded you and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."**

How can we regain the mission zeal that characterized our church body in the past? Let me share the experience of Rev. Larry Locke Triumphant King Lutheran Church Pastor:

Last May, when asked to assist Triumphant King in charting a path for their future, the District Office recommended using the resource Gospel DNA Toolkit. Originally it was presented during Sunday School, which was before worship services and attendance was marginal. So worship times and class times were adjusted, and of 25 in worship, roughly 14 stayed to go through the videos and discussions in the DNA Toolkit.

I was impressed with the resource, and one member was inspired to buy the book, which she said was better than the videos. The spirit of the congregation then went through a transformation; rather than lamenting their size, their age, or their inabilities, they began to see themselves as a mission with more assets than those who planted the seeds of the LCMS. Also, the discussions changed from when and if we close the doors to how can we reach out into our community. A group of the members went out to meet the church's neighbors, they offered a BBQ to the community and sent out flyers, revitalized the church's sign, and began to plan for a dog park for the neighbors.

This has led to putting ministry in the hands of the members who were inspired as they build on those who have gone before. I am not normally a program person, but I would recommend the Gospel DNA Toolkit to everyone.

Pastor's message continued....

The Gospel DNA presentations will take the part of the sermon in our services from January 12 through February 23. My prayer is that the discussions that are generated from this series will set the stage for our ministry going forward. I urge you to come and be a part of our discussions.

January 12 – The Frontier

January 19 – The Institution vs
The Movement

January 26 – The People

February 2 – Multiplication

February 9 – The Truth

February 16 – Adaptability

February 23 – Self Sacrifice

Pastor Griesse

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LOOKING AHEAD IN LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

Bethlehem is joining in on the celebration of Lutheran Hour Ministries Sunday on February 2, 2020. This year, we will focus on the opportunities God gives each of us to engage in spiritual conversations with those around us. LHM offers a variety of resources to help equip you to meet people where they are in their faith journey, beginning conversations at natural points. LHM Sunday is also an opportunity to celebrate together the impact the Lord makes on those people's lives, one heart at a time.

Lutheran Hour Ministry radio stations that we support each month are 91.5FM at 7am & 9:30AM at 8am on Sunday mornings. Tune in and encourage your homebound friends to do so also.

Missions in Motion

Love In the Name of Christ (INC).

Every day Love INC receives calls from people who have real needs and are looking for help. Our Connection Center Coordinator, and volunteers from some of our partner churches answer these phone calls daily. Their goal is to be a bridge between those seeking help and those who can provide it.

Opportunities to help the homeless this winter include filling the needs of Rod's House and Camp Hope. Check out the list of needs in the shopping cart in the narthex.

Health Kits for the Salvation Army and Eisenhower High School

**All items are needed
especially hand towels.**

Hand lotions, shampoos and kleenex should be trial size so everything fits in a gallon bag.

Toothpaste	Toothbrush
Hand Towels	Wash cloths (not white)
Hand lotion	Shampoo
Band-aids	Combs
Deoderant	small Kleenex

The LWML wishes to Thank everyone who planned, prepared, and participated in the Advent Dinner and Bazaar on December 1st.

Your efforts and generosity raised just over \$1,600 for the Professional Churchworkers fund at Concordia Portland and the Mission Grant fund of the WA-AK District LWML

Check out the bulletin board near the mailboxes to see the many people you blessed by your efforts.

Nothing is Hidden that cannot be disclosed

By- Archana Mala Barik
USA

There is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.

Luke 8:17

Our actions and words are always watched by Jesus. Even the thoughts of our minds which we do not speak cannot be hidden from God. If we hide in darkness or go deep in a sea, we cannot hide ourselves from Jesus. In the world, some of our actions that we do not want anybody to observe or know, those are also revealed after a while. When our actions cannot be hidden from men, how can they be kept away or unknown from our Lord?

A man purchased a land to build his house. He hired a carpenter for all the wood work—doors, windows, cabinets etc for his new house. He purchased two dozens of fancy, copper knobs to put on doors and where ever required. He gave all the supplies to the carpenter. Two days later, the carpenter asked the owner that he had asked for two dozens of knobs, but he found only a dozen in the supplies. The owner said, “But I had purchased two dozens of knobs.” The carpenter kept stating that there were only one dozen of knobs with the other material. The owner got so upset, but then he purchased another one dozen of the same kind of knobs from the same shop he had purchased before.

A couple of days after, the owner went to the carpenter’s house to discuss more about the wood work. When he stood in front of the door of the carpenter’s house, he noticed the same type of knob on the door. He knocked at the door; the carpenter and his brother who used to assist him came out of the house. The owner explained to him some more work, and then gently commented pointing at the knob on the door, “This knob looks the same like the knobs I have bought for my house.” The carpenter said, “This is not the same. I bought this a while ago.” The man took out a knob out of his pocket and placed it parallel to the knob on the door. Both the knobs looked the same. The carpenter got so nervous. The man pointed at a red sticker on the knob he had in his hand. The door knob also had the same kind of red sticker pasted on it. Not only this, but even both the red stickers had the shop’s name written on. The carpenter and his brother became speechless and ashamed. The man just smiled.

Prayer: My dear Jesus, thank you for meditating on me day and night. Thank you for watching over me all the time. Fill my heart with fear for the Lord and respect for my Father in heaven, who provides me with all good things and takes care of me. Help me do, speak, and think only of the things that are right in my Jesus’ eyes. In your precious name, I ask-- Amen.

Stay encouraged!

The gift of Christ is our light



"When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel'" (Matt. 2:3-6).

Earlier in this journey of *Simple Gifts* we reflected on light. Today we spend a moment reflecting on the potential negative of light. What could be bad about light? Well, when the light comes on, that which you do wrong can no longer be hidden. When the light comes on you can't hide the fact that you are sneaking a midnight snack, snatching some loot or cheating on your spouse! The light reveals things. Sometimes what we see isn't always pleasant.

As the light shone on Jerusalem all those centuries ago, it brought to light two very clear and disturbing realities. First, the evil King Herod was not a godly man. Second, the very people who should have seen the same star that the Magi saw, missed it! The light of Christ reveals evil and ignorance.

The light of the Lord that shines on our stewardship can be just as damning to us. As we reflect on God's generosity toward us, it shines a light on our response. What does it show? Often, it reveals our stinginess in support of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the fact that we miss out on just how significant the role we have as

stewards of resources plays in the sharing of the light of the Gospel.

As this light continues to shine on us today, may the Lord who calls us to faith and service, grant us His grace to reflect honestly and respond generously to His call to be stewards. Repentance is the answer to evil and ignorance. Jesus is just the light we need!

Prayer

Light of the world, Jesus the Christ, shine on us. Show us where we have fallen short as stewards of the simple gifts You give for us to show Your glory to our neighbors and the world. Overcome the evil in us and enlighten our ignorance that we may serve You and that others see the light of life in us! Amen.