

THE COURIER

Online Edition

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem, PA

FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Partners in Ministry,

On January 6th we move from the Christmas Season into the Epiphany Season, also known as the season of light. We remember the star that led the magi from the East in their search of the Holy Baby. We remember that these wise men brought gifts for the child: gold and frankincense and myrrh. And we are challenged to let the light of Christ shine in our own lives. Through worship and service, through giving and caring, we can help to bring holy light into the midst of the dark places of the world.

Living in the light means being open to new ways of sharing together in mission and ministry. In 2006 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America published a new worship book: Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Seven members of St. Peter's Staff attended an all-day workshop to familiarize ourselves with the new materials. Fortunately, the hymns we use are contained in the new hymnal portion of the book. The worship portion now includes ten different settings for Holy Communion, as well as a variety of other worship options.

St. Peter's presently has 40 copies of ELW for use by the choirs, as well as a set of accompaniment books and two missals. We also have an online subscription which allows us to download all the worship materials, including prayers and scripture readings.

This will allow us to begin using an even more "user friendly" worship bulletin beginning in Lent. Those who have generously supported the bulletins and Celebrate Inserts will have the opportunity to co-sponsor this expanded version of the bulletin in honor or in memory of loved ones and events.

The new Evangelical Lutheran Worship will be introduced to those who attend the Annual Meeting on January 28th. Many congregations have already begun using this worship book on a regular basis. We can probably use our paperback hymnals – With One Voice and the Renewing Worship Songbook – for another year. Our copies of the Lutheran Book of Worship are over 25 years old. In 2007 the Worship and Music Committee will be looking at a plan to move from three hymnals to one.

Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

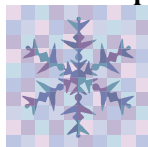
God's blessings in this Season of Light.

In Christ,



The Rev. Edith B. Roberts
Senior Pastor

January Worship Highlights



Wednesday, January 3	10:30 AM - Holy Communion and Healing in the Chapel
Sunday, January 7	The Baptism of Our Lord 8:15 and 11 AM - Holy Communion in the Nave Installation of Congregation Council 6:30 PM – Holy Communion in the Chapel
Wednesday, January 10	10:30 AM - Holy Communion in the Chapel
Sunday, January 14	2 nd Sunday after the Epiphany 8:15 and 11 AM - Holy Communion in the Nave Baptism at 11 AM worship service 6:30 PM – Holy Communion in the Chapel
Wednesday, January 17	10:30 AM - Holy Communion in the Chapel
Sunday, January 21	3 rd Sunday after the Epiphany 8:15 and 11 AM - Holy Communion in the Nave Baptism at the 11 AM worship service 6:30 PM – Holy Communion in the Chapel
Wednesday, January 24	10:30 AM - Holy Communion in the Chapel St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor
Sunday, January 28	4 th Sunday after the Epiphany Youth Sunday 9:30 AM - Holy Communion in the Nave 6:30 PM – Holy Communion in the Chapel
Wednesday, January 31	10:30 AM – Holy Communion in the Chapel

Jottings from Jon

*O Come, Desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind.*

Oh, bid our sad divisions cease;

Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

If I was allowed only one prayer for our world, only one request before the God of the Universe, only one sentence in which to sum up my hope for the human family and for the earth that is our home, this verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" would be it.

You may not be as familiar with this verse as some of the others, as it was omitted from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. I somewhat jokingly wonder (but only somewhat) if the thought of a world at peace where all of humanity rejoices in their God-given unity instead of the things that divide them seemed just too unbelievable to the editors of the hymnal. After all, our world today seems more divided than ever. On just about any issue you can think of, there are people that hold seemingly polar opposite views, often with great passion and intensity. Do you ever wish there was something -- anything -- that all of humanity could claim as their common ground?

If so, you aren't alone. Perhaps the reason this ancient Advent hymn (it dates back to the 12th century!) has survived all these years is because it gives voice to a universal human longing for *unity*. Deep down, I think we know that there is something that binds us together that is far stronger than all the things that try to divide us. I notice it when we gather for worship and sing together, pray together, and gather around God's table to receive the forgiveness and healing of the Sacrament. In those moments of togetherness, we can feel how the love of God flows through all of us, in spite of our differences -- just as it flows through all of humanity.

I sometimes wonder if that's how the shepherds and sages who came to worship the baby Jesus felt as they gathered in his humble stable. They had come from all different directions and probably didn't have very much in common. They only had a star to guide them and a promise that God had come to make a home with them. And there they found themselves huddled together in a manger with animals and strangers to welcome the strangest king the world had ever known: a tiny infant resting in his mother's arms. Perhaps looking into that child's

gentle face -- and seeing there the face of God -- their differences didn't seem so important anymore. Perhaps they knew, if only for a night, what it feels like to live in heaven's peace.

May that peace fill your hearts and minds this Christmas as you take your place at Jesus' feet. And beholding him once again, may you see his light reflected in every human face, knowing that the love he brings make us one.

May you have a blessed Christmas!

Jon Niketh
Pastoral Intern

December Council Highlights

A motion was approved to:

- Give the Bethlehem Area School District voice during the Special Order of the Dec. 12, 2006, Council meeting.
- Give Ron Frankenfield and Keith Young voice during the Special Order of the Dec. 12, 2006, Council meeting.
- Appoint Dot Nagy to a one-year term as Financial Secretary.
- Appoint Adam King to a one-year term as Assistant to the Treasurer.
- Allow Emmanuel EC Church to continue to use St. Peter's basketball court on Wednesday evenings until the end of their season in the Spring of 2007.
- Authorize the Treasurer and Finance Committee members working on end-of-year finances to use remaining Trust Fund interest and/or growth income to pay our financial commitments should there be a deficit.

Building Use Request:

- Allow a family gathering in the Trauger Room for a baby shower on Dec. 30, 2006, from Noon to 5 PM.

Election of Officers:

President – Tony Strobel
Vice-President – Sharon Wiles-Young
Secretary – Carol Frankenfield
Treasurer – Joe Bleier

The Courier of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Courier is published eleven times a year by St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 474 Vine Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (a non-profit organization). The Senior Pastor is the Rev. Edith B. Roberts. All questions about the publication can be addressed to the editor at the Church Office, telephone 610-867-0519. This online edition is identical to the print edition with the exception of the Treasurer's Report and news from the Synod.

Women of the ELCA

Morning Bible Study will be held on Tuesdays, January 2nd & 16th, from 9 AM to 10:30 AM in the Trauger Room. All women of the congregation are encouraged to start the new calendar year by becoming a part of this group whose members support each other in their journeys of faith. The theme of this year's study is "Hope in God in Times of Suffering." There is an empty chair waiting just for you!

Lutheran Men In Mission

We are meeting on **Saturday, January 20, at 8:30 am** for breakfast in the Social Room. Lee Rayden will lead devotions. We will then continue our study of the Book of Acts. We hope you will attend!

Offering Envelopes

Boxes are available for pick-up in the lower narthex. Please consider a gift of \$5 in the "Initial Offering" envelope to cover the cost of the offering envelopes.

St. Peter's Youth Sunday – January 28, 2007 –

Plan now to attend the 9:30 AM worship service as our St. Peter's youth assist with worship and provide the music for the day. ALL Sunday Church School students will be singing and leading the worship. St. Peter's is blessed to have many caring children and young people participating in the life of the congregation. This is a special opportunity to celebrate with them. Their joy is contagious. Come and share in the celebration - that Jesus loves us every day and everywhere!

Annual Congregational Meeting

St. Peter's Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 28, immediately following the 9:30 AM worship service. We'll gather in the Social Room to plan for St. Peter's future and to see "The Year in Review" power point presentation. Please bring a finger food to share and your copy of the Annual Report. Be part of the St. Peter's family meeting!

Souper Bowl Sunday

Each year on Youth Sunday, St. Peter's young people challenge members to contribute \$1.00 each as a part of Souper Bowl Sunday. This year the challenge is scheduled for January 28, 2007. Several years ago, a Presbyterian youth group in South Carolina began this campaign to address world hunger. It has grown to be an interdenominational event throughout the United States. Each congregation is then asked to call or e-mail in their offering total for the day so that the grand total received can be announced.

Worshippers may place their \$1.00 donations into a soup tureen as they leave worship that Sunday. St. Peter's youth will decide how to distribute the monies collected. Usually the St. Peter's money is shared between South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center Food Bank and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

You will find the tureen in the narthex when you arrive for the 9:30 AM Youth Sunday Worship. After worship the tureen will be placed on the snack table during the Annual Congregational Meeting. St. Peter's is a congregation that cares and shares. Please be ready to give at least \$1.00 on Youth Sunday, January 28th, or Sunday, February 4th, which is the day most congregations will recognize Souper Bowl Sunday.

Learning Ministries Day

Come be part of a day of hospitality and learning at St. Peter's. The Synod Learning Ministries Day will be held here on Saturday, January 27, from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM. The theme for the day is "The Cost of Discipleship." The keynoter will be Bishop David Strobel. If you want to register for workshops or be part of our hospitality team, see 'Miss Liz' soon.

Campus Ministry

The group will meet for lunch for the first time this semester on Thursday, January 25. Ben Larson from Bear Creek Camp will share job opportunities for the summer of 2007.

All LYO's

Anyone who wants to join in the fun is invited to come ice skating at Municipal Rink on Sunday, January 21, 2007. We'll eat some pizza together and then go ice skating from 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM. The cost per youth will be \$4.00.

Reminders as We Start the New Year

It's a new year, and with 2007 come several reminders for adult members of St. Peter's. Have you:

- picked up your 2007 offering envelope box?
- turned in your 2007 commitment card?
- completed a record card when you received Holy Communion?

St. Peter's by-laws define an active member as one who has both made a contribution of record and received Holy Communion at St. Peter's, including filling out a Communion card, at least once during the year. Let us each do our part to keep St. Peter's records up to date and our financial commitments current. With God's help we can accomplish great things as we work together.

Sunday Evening Worship at St. Peter's

The informal worship service is from 6:30 – 7 PM in the Chapel and includes Holy Communion, prayer, singing, guitar music, and a short message. Dress is very casual, and 20+ people usually attend. Stop by on Sunday evening and check it out!

Weather-related Cancellations

If it is necessary to cancel worship or another St. Peter's event due to bad weather, the cancellation notice will be listed on St. Peter's voicemail. Call the Church Office, and let the phone ring about ten times until the voicemail picks up. If you receive the normal message, there are no cancellations.

21st Century Update

During 2006, the people of St. Peter's continued to be faithful stewards, as our monthly mortgage payment was mailed out on time each month. Our monthly payment is \$4,750. Thanks to refinancing the mortgage and to some additional payments, we should have it paid off in 2010, and we will have saved money, too!

Our donations made in the 21st Century envelopes included in the offering envelope boxes, of a share or half share of "Interest for a Day" in honor or in memory of a loved one or an event, and of memorial gifts will enable us to keep our commitments. When we receive enough money over and above the mortgage payment and can make an extra mortgage payment, we decrease the length of the loan and increase the amount St. Peter's saves.

As we all work together to pay off our debt, may we constantly thank God for entrusting us as stewards of these wonderful buildings and of the ministries they allow us to host!

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

As the weather outside grows colder, there are those among us without enough money to pay for the fuel bill to heat their home, pay rent for a dry place to live, buy warm clothing for their children, or place a warm meal on the table for their family. From time to time, Pastor Roberts is asked to assist individuals and families experiencing difficulties of a wide variety. Contributions may be made by placing your donations in a pew envelope and marking it "Pastor's Fund." Won't you reach out to help a neighbor in need?

From the Parish Record

Baptism:

Jacob David Taylor – December 10, 2006

Funerals:

Grace A. Pettite – October 31, 2006

Gertrude Orban (non-member)-Nov. 7, 2006
(Jonathan R. Niketh, Pastoral Intern)

Grace E. Ackerman – November 18, 2006
(The Rev. George Spieker,
Visitation Pastor)

Kathryn Ockenhouse – December 6, 2006
(The Rev. George Spieker,
Visitation Pastor)

Heating Costs

Please prayerfully consider generous gifts in each of the "energy needs" envelopes in the offering envelope boxes, or use a pew envelope and mark it "energy needs." It is important that each member consider a \$5 or \$10 gift in the energy envelope so we can keep St. Peter's a warm place to worship.

Mardi Gras

"Music for the Journey" is the theme for our celebration on Sunday, February 18, 2007.

Before the show is the 12:30 PM luncheon in the Social Room. The Mardi Gras show will be in the Nave at 1:30 PM. Make sure to get your tickets in the Reception Area or from the Church Office during the week.

Parishioner of the Week

In each Sunday bulletin you will find the name of one of St. Peter's homebound members, listed as the "Parishioner of the Week." He or she will be lifted up in the Prayer of the Church during worship. Please remember our Parishioners of the Week in your own prayers and send cards or notes to let them know that you remember them as a part of the St. Peter's family.

Handmade Items Needed

Now is a good time to start making sewing and needlework items for the May 2007 Bach Ministry of Hospitality. What's your favorite stitch? What's your favorite pattern? During these cold winter months, please share your talents to produce one or several of your "creations." Aprons, baby sweater sets (white is most popular), afghans, doilies, placemats, bibs, slippers, pashima scarves, mittens, hats, handbags, and other garments are desired.

There will be May 2007 Bach Festival patrons looking for handmade items. We need your help to support St. Peter's ministry of hospitality. Go ahead. Knit one, purl two. Or hook a bunch of chain stitches. Or fire up the sewing machine. Chances are you'll enjoy yourself as well.

NOTE: 2007 is the 100th Anniversary of the Bach Festival. You can help to make our hospitality even more special this year!

With Many Thanks!

From Elsie Rayden – “I would like to thank my St. Peter’s family for the cards, prayers, and telephone calls received after my out-patient surgery. It feels so good to know people really do care. A special thanks to ‘Miss’ Liz for the turkey day dinner delivered after the Wednesday service.”

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Nave Christmas tree: Kenny, Keith, & Joshua Young, Ed Wirth, Connie Mullen, Morris Litrenta, Adam King, John Kalynych, Al Radtke, Ron Frankenfield, Luther & Lorraine Kurtz, Andrew & Michael Taylor, Joe Bleier, George Kummer II, Kirk McFadden, Ron Kropf, and staff members Pastor Roberts, Intern Jon Niketh and Barbara Taylor.

Keep Someone Warm

You are invited to come help make blankets for Lutheran World Relief. Even if you have never used a needle or tried to sew, you can make one of these warm, useful blankets. This is something both women and men can do. The blankets are three layers of fabric put together using some sewing machine skills. There are some experts who do that part. The blankets are then knotted by pulling strings through the layers and tying them off. When finished, these blankets are sent around the world by LWR and are used to provide warmth, room dividers, baby carriers, and in many other creative ways.

So, in the midst of the chilly days of January, come on January 8th & 22nd at 9 AM. This is an opportunity to join in the experience of making a blanket that will warm someone in another part of the world. Stay as long as you can. Clean-up will happen by Noon. By then, several blankets will have been made.

If you have large pieces of fabric (64” x 84” or 60” x 80”) or lightweight blankets that can be used as the filler layer, please bring them to the Church Office.

Hospital Admissions

Due to privacy laws, hospitals no longer always call St. Peter’s when one of our members is admitted. If you or another St. Peter’s member is admitted to a hospital, please call the Church Office so our Pastors and Intern can stop by and check in!

Hold One Another In Prayer

St. Peter’s is a praying congregation! At every worship service, the Prayers of the Church are lifted up. We thank God for our blessings and share our needs. Our Sunday morning prayers include the names of parishioners who will celebrate birthdays that week, one of the congregations of the Bethlehem/Easton Mission District, our Partner Congregation in Tanzania, and a variety of other needs and concerns.

You are invited to stop at the Prayer Book before each Sunday morning worship service to add your own joys and concerns. A new prayer list is started on the first Sunday of each month. At Sunday evening and Wednesday morning worship services, the Pastor will ask for names to be included in the prayers at the start of the service.

Look Who’s Having a Birthday

Please remember, with notes and cards, the following homebound members who are celebrating their birthdays this month:

Doris Simons – January 18
Country Meadows #221
4007 Green Pond Road
Bethlehem, PA 18020

Gizella Wescoe – January 24
Holy Family Manor - #119
1200 Spring Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Partners in Ministry

As of March 1, 2007, St. Peter's will no longer have separate Celebrate and Bulletin sponsorships because the lessons and prayers will be incorporated in the bulletin. Instead, we begin the "Partners in Ministry" Program. As before, two sponsors will have their gift in memory or in honor of a loved one or a special occasion listed in the Sunday bulletin. The cost will be reduced to \$18.00 per sponsor (\$36.00 total for each bulletin). These sponsorships defray the cost of the bulletin covers, paper, printing, as well as the copyright costs. Thank you to all who faithfully sponsor St. Peter's worship bulletins.

For information on available sponsorships for 2007, contact Parish Secretary Linda Zrinski at 610-867-0519.

JANUARY CHURCH OFFICE NEWS

Weekdays from January 16-February 6 St. Peter's Church Office will be staffed by a volunteer from 9 AM-noon while our Parish Secretary is on vacation. Please plan to call or visit during those hours to be sure someone is present to help you. Other staff members will be coming and going as usual for meetings, appointments, etc. If you call the office and no one is in, let the phone ring about 10 times until the voice mail picks up to provide the names and phone numbers of staff members on call.

Feed a Family

Every day, many of us overeat. Every day, millions go hungry. Jesus calls us to love all people and to work for justice. Here's a single way to do so:

Each week as you grocery shop, set aside \$1.50 – the cost of a loaf of bread. Place your donation in an envelope, and mark it "World Hunger Appeal." Place the envelope in the offering plate, or mail it to the Church Office. A loaf of bread could be used to make sandwiches for eight people.

As all the people of St. Peter's work together, we can help overcome hunger in the United States and the world.

St. Peter's Designated Gifts List

Furniture for Bride' Room:

2 sofas	\$2,000.00
Folding Machine	\$700.00
10 Light Weight Tables	\$50.00 each
ADF	\$1000.00

NOTE: 1. Prices are approximate.

2. Where a range of prices is indicated, more specific information is available from the Church Office.

3. A memorial Plaque may be purchased separately for mounting on Memorial Board in the Narthex. Approximate cost is around \$20.00-\$30.00.

4. Please call Designated Gifts Coordinator, Evelyn Smith (610-868-2166) with questions or for more information.

Save the Date for SYMDANO!

"What is SYMDANO?" you might ask. SYMDANO is a Synod-sponsored day for youth, advisors, parents, and young adults. This year SYMDANO will be held on Saturday April 14, 2007. The all-day event will take place at Atonement Lutheran in Wyomissing. Mark your calendar and save the date! The theme of the day: "What's in Your Treasure Chest?" The day will include great music, games, workshops, lunch, and good times. A mailing with details and the permission forms will be sent to all youth households. The 1st & 2nd Year Confirmation classes will attend as part of their Confirmation experience.



Together, we make a difference in Darfur and all of Sudan

After years of conflict, the situation remains grave for the people of Darfur, Sudan. It has been described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern times. Fighting between rebel groups and the militia groups backed by the Sudanese government has affected more than six million people. At least 1.2 million people have been displaced within the region and more than 200,000 fled to neighboring Chad. There have been systematic and arbitrary executions of civilians, rape, torture, and the looting and burning of villages. The international community is keeping up the pressure on the Sudanese government to meet its commitments to disarm the militia accused of committing atrocities and to restore security in the Darfur region.

The complexities of the crisis “can overwhelm and paralyze us, so that we do nothing,” said ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. “We must not let this happen. Christ died and was raised so that we might be free. Free to help our neighbor. Free to share God’s love with all creation. Free to love one another. As children of this loving God, we are called to relieve human suffering and work together for a just and lasting peace. Together we can and do make a difference in Darfur and all of Sudan.”

ELCA International Disaster Response has committed \$245,000 for work in the Darfur region and Chad. Your generous contributions will help meet critical needs—water, food, shelter, and medicines—and

make a life-saving difference.

Learn more at www.elca.org/disaster and www.elca.org/advocacy. St. Peter's congregation has added its name to the support of the Save Darfur Coalition. You can help as an individual by making a check out to St. Peter's and designating it for Darfur Disaster Response and by sending email or letters to those who represent us in Washington, D.C.



St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

474 Vine Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015
610-867-0519

CARELINE: A Spiritual Message: 610-868-CARE

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday
8 AM to 3 PM

Friday: 9 AM to NOON

FAX: 610-867-1249

E-mail: church@stpetersbethlehem.org

Web site: www.stpetersbethlehem.org

STAFF

The Rev. Edith B. Roberts - Senior Pastor

The Rev. George F. Spieker - Visitation Pastor

Elizabeth McKee Elterich - AIM for
Education/Youth/Outreach

Barbara-Anne G. Taylor - AIM for Parish Administration

Jonathan R. Niketh - Intern Pastor

Jean E. Ocker - Director of Music

Marisa H. Deshler – Organist

Anthony DeAngelis, Sr. – Bell Director

Linda M. Zrinski - Parish Secretary

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday: 8:15 & 11:00 AM Holy Communion in Nave

9:30 AM Sunday Church School

6:30 PM Holy Communion in Chapel

Wednesday: 10:30 AM Holy Communion in Chapel

Child care is available in the Nursery for children up to five years of age on Sunday mornings.

