

# Lord of Life Lutheran Church

*"Where There's Life For You!"*

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# LIFELINE

Lifeline is a Newsletter published by Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Moreno Valley, California.

### Our Mission Statement

*We are a congregation of believers in Jesus Christ, called by the Spirit into a community of faith and love, nurtured by Word and Sacrament, and empowered by the gospel to be God's instruments of love and grace.*



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## Journey with Jesus

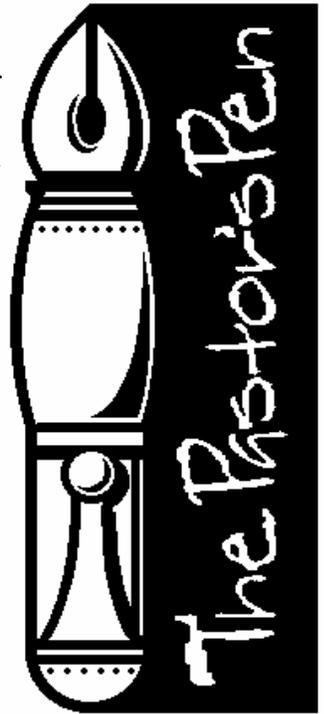
Last month we remembered the first La Posada once more, the journey of Joseph and “great with child” Mary from the northern village of Nazareth down south to the Judean hills and the village of Bethlehem, only to find upon arriving, there was no room for them in the Inn. Christian folk often reenact this search for lodging among their church communities. The journey continues.

Perhaps you journeyed to relatives or friends for Christmas or New Year’s but undoubtedly your journey was a lot less taxing than the trek Joseph and pregnant Mary made 2000 years ago. Prompted by a decree from Caesar that their taxes were due and payable in the village of Joseph’s lineage, Bethlehem, the couple made their 65 mile journey through some rugged terrain on foot. I know a donkey is always seen in all the storybooks and movies, but no such beast of burden is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke’s Christmas account in the second chapter of Luke . Today a trip of that length would take us about an hour. Joseph and Mary probably took at least three days to accomplish the journey. They slept on the ground along the way and bedded down in a stable that first Christmas Eve. Sometime during that first holy night, Mary, without the assistance of a friend, relative or midwife, gave birth to her first newborn Son, Jesus our Lord and Savior. The journey continues.

This month we follow the Star of Bethlehem once more in this glorious season of Epiphany. We remember, on January 6, the journey of those first magi as they traversed over field and mountain to complete their search for the promised Child. This, too, was a rugged journey unlike our more comfortable jaunts today. And once there, they presented the newborn King with their treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The journey continues.

The question remains, where will our journey take us this year of our Lord 2006? The calendar, like other years, offers us 365 days to **journey with Jesus**. Each day affords us a new opportunity to seek His guidance as to where to go and what to do. I believe each day comes as a special gift to us. It is ours to do with as He leads us. Some days may come in wrappings that are less than joyous, yet nonetheless they are still our days to perform the deeds He would have us do. The journey continues.

Where will He take you this year? And where will He lead Lord of Life? We don’t know all of the answers but we do know a few. We will celebrate new carpeting and new sanctuary chairs possibly before the end of this first month of the year. Then toward spring we will be in awe of our ten new stained glass windows. We are already enjoying our brand new church sign and website. Have you hit on our site yet? I hope so. The journey continues.



May the Lord of Life guide all of your days and your deeds with His Holy Spirit this day, this week, this month and this year. May each new day, each new gift, find you on an exciting journey as the adventure of life, your **journey with Jesus**, continues.

# The Night Before Christmas

*Edited version by Cindy Cassem*

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the streets  
Not a morsel was found, there was nothing to eat.  
The stockings had holes, so they washed them with care,  
Hoping they'd last or there would be nothing to wear.  
The children all snuggled next to the barrel of fire,  
Soon they'd be sleeping, hungry and tired.  
A child dies every six minutes, that's 10 in an hour.  
We can stop this great tragedy. We all have the power.  
Take your pennies and nickels, your quarters and dimes,  
Put them all together, we still have some time.  
If we add it all up with the money from others,  
We can feed the small children, especially those without  
mothers.

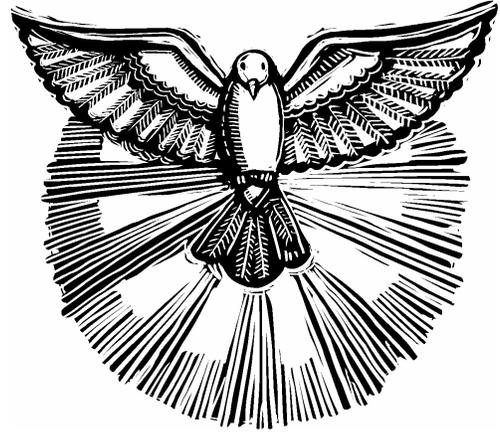
The glow of the fire, the only source of light,  
Was all they could see by in the black of the night.  
When what to their wondering eyes should appear?  
But a truck full of food, and they knew it was good.  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
At first glance they believed him to be St Nick.  
As they drew in their heads and turning around,  
Over to them, he came with a bound.  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave them to know they had nothing to dread.  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all their arms, then turned with a jerk.  
He sprang to his truck, as he was thanked for what was given.  
Surveying the scene, it was like a piece of heaven.  
There were tears of joy from each girl and boy.  
You could tell how much it meant for all that was sent.  
And he drove off so quickly, each delivery so brief.

**Merry Christmas to all from Lutheran World Relief.**

During the month of December Lord of Life raised **\$4,269.73** for ELCA Lutheran World Hunger. Let us challenge ourselves to continue these gifts all year, because people are hungry every day of the year. Offering envelopes are always available on the church narthex counter for future donations to ELCA World Hunger where 100% of your donations go to meet the need!



# Confirmation Class



Our Confirmation youth, teachers and guides, in answer to Teri Hilker's question as to ***what our parents provide for us that we are grateful for***, gave these responses. Notice that all these responses would also apply to what God, our heavenly Father, provides for us!

- ✦ They give me things
- ✦ Provide me with love.
- ✦ They always listen to me when troubled.
- ✦ They took me to church.
- ✦ They put a roof over your head.
- ✦ They supply you with things you need.
- ✦ Provide me with a home.
- ✦ They give me stuff.
- ✦ They give me food, clothing and a home.
- ✦ They love me.
- ✦ My folks always stressed that I work toward excellence in all I did.
- ✦ That they're my mom and dad.
- ✦ They give stuff that I need in life.
- ✦ They let me sleep.
- ✦ For paying for stuff - like useful stuff I need.
- ✦ Being there for me when I need it!
- ✦ For respecting me!
- ✦ My dad may have been strict, but he was always fair!
- ✦ The fact that they love me even when I mess up.
- ✦ They taught me right and wrong - gave me a conscience.
- ✦ They sacrificed often to provide me with some of the things of life.
- ✦ They would die for me. I heard my dad say this about my sister.
- ✦ She remembers me in her prayers.



Over fifteen years ago, a simple prayer: *Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl Football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat*, led a senior high youth group to a simple, yet powerful idea to fight hunger and poverty in their community.

The Souper Bowl of Caring calls all youth groups, civic organizations and schools to action to make a difference in the lives of others through this simple movement of caring. Over 11,000 groups participated in 2005. Since the Souper Bowl's inception, ordinary youth, with God's help, have generated over \$28 million for soup kitchens food banks and other charities in communities across the country.

We will collect a special offering at Lord of Life for the Central City Lutheran Mission (CCLM) in San Bernardino. This will be our 8<sup>th</sup> year of participating in this event. Mark your calendar! February 5<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to all who join in this partnership of caring.



*By Robert Willis*

The youth group, during the months of November and December, spent every Friday night at the church. Some nights we played games and did youth discussions out of a handbook provided by Pastor Dave. Other nights we were decorating Thanksgiving baskets to give to the needy folks in our community. We also spent one night separating toys, by grade level, for the Edgemont Toy Drive. Many of the youth, along with adults, came on the 10th of December for our wrapping party. The youth Christmas party was fun. Allie Smith won the prize for best Christmas outfit, with Meggie Hilker a very close second. A flyer will be circulated with upcoming events. My favorite scripture is Galatians 5: 22-23. I challenge each of you to commit to these nine "fruits of the spirit", with God's help, today and forever.

**I Choose Love...** No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves.

**I Choose Joy...** I will invite my God to be the God of circumstance. I will refuse the temptation to be cynical...the tool of the lazy thinker. I will refuse to see people as anything less than human beings, created by God. I will refuse to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to see God.

**I Choose Peace...** I will live forgiven. I will forgive so that I may live.

**I Choose Patience...** I will overlook the inconveniences of the world. Instead of cursing the one who takes my place, I'll invite him to do so. Rather than complain that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray. Instead of clinching my fist at new assignments, I will face them with joy and courage.

**I Choose Kindness...** I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone, kind to the rich, for they are afraid, and kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.

**I Choose Goodness...** I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. I choose goodness.

**I Choose Faithfulness...** Today I will keep my promises. My debtors will not regret their trust. My friends will not question my word. My family will not question my love.

**I Choose Gentleness...** Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself.

**I Choose Self-Control...** I am a spiritual being...After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let what will rot, rule the eternal. I choose self-control. I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. I choose self-control.

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control

To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek his grace. And then, when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest.

# Church Council Report

By Bob Vernlund

January is an important month for your church council. You as a congregation get to see how we did on our budget for last year and vote on the proposed budget for the next year. You also get to do something else that is important. You vote in the new members of the council who serve for a planned three year term. Under normal conditions there would be three members every year to vote in on our nine member council. Each member can serve a maximum of six years in a row before they have to step down. This year there are four vacancies to fill, three with three year terms and one to complete the last two years of a three year term. The proposed candidates are: **Cathy Fulgenzi** (to complete her second three year term), **Cindy Cassem, Michelle Larsen, and Becci Van Hoosier**. As candidates these names will be brought before our Annual Meeting at 10:00 am following the early Sunday service on January 29.

The departing council members are: Mona Daugherty, Kathy Goos, and Paul Parenteau.

The council should always remain as a cross section of our congregation. They represent everyone and should be the people who reflect the values and concerns of every member. They not only get to see the business side of the church, but they get to be involved in every ministry of this congregation. It is a great experience and a important part of each congregation. You as a congregation should pray for those who serve on the council and take the time to thank those who have served us so well. May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire those who volunteer to do God's will.

# The Church Upgrade Fundraising Project Update

Wow! Look at what we've done as we end the 2005 calendar year. 50 families have contributed or pledged to buy one or more square yard of carpet, a new sanctuary chair, or a stained glass window. There are only eight chairs left to sell and 155 yards of carpet. The stained glass was sold out on the first day of the campaign.

We are humbled at the generous response and outpouring of love and dedication each family has shown for this project. We will continue this project until March 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, but there isn't much left.

The great news was we had enough surplus left from our building debt fundraising of last spring to cover the lack of response to our monthly debt payment as we closed out the year. If this generous support continues we are not planning to have any other fundraisers this spring.

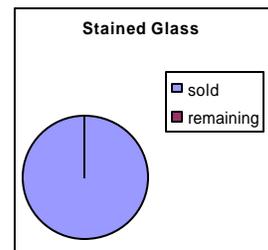
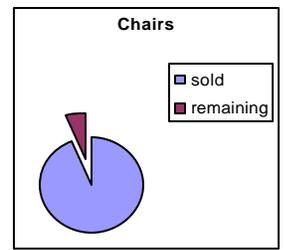
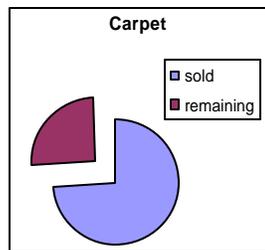
We hope this type of support will allow us to continue to improve the landscaping needed on the outside as we beautify the interior of our church with carpet, chairs, and stained glass.

The carpet and chairs should be installed before we have our congregational meeting and elections on January 29, 2006. The stained glass is planned to be installed before Easter on April 16<sup>th</sup>.



Annual Church Meeting

Sunday January 29 at 10 AM



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## A NOTE OF



Lord of Life,

Happy New Year to everyone! Thank you for remembering me at Christmas time with the special “bonus”. It has been my privilege to serve you and worship God in music. I enjoy seeing your smiling faces on Sunday morning. Thank you for this opportunity and for your kindness. May God bless all of you this year and draw you closer to Him. Love Jana Kaiser, Accompanist.



Thanks for all your cards, prayers and gifts this year and for the generous Christmas bonus.  
God’s blessings in 2006  
From Pastor Dave and Ann



Thank you for the Christmas bonus and for the thoughtful cards. It is really wonderful knowing how much I am appreciated. I’m grateful for your generosity.  
? Julie

## Another Successful Toy Drive!

Through Christ all things are possible. Not only did we meet our goal of providing each of the 721 students a toy for Christmas, there were even some extra – all of which were given to Edgemont. As in previous years, Lord of Life was the major contributor of toys. The remaining gifts were given by Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Edgemont First Baptist, Moreno Valley Presbyterian Church, Kyle Hudson’s Boy Scout Troop 1776, and Marilyn Georg of Tarbell Realtors. We’d like to thank everyone for their generosity.

Thanks to Martha Mott our toy drive coordinator for keeping us informed with weekly updates on our progress and who inspired all of us to shop for those toys! Special thanks to Linda Willis and Cathy Fulgenzi who organized the sorting and the wrapping party – not an easy task! We had over 70 people who showed up to help wrap gifts including a large group of students from Kimberly Fulgenzi’s Health Academy and National Honor Society at Valley View High School.

The highlight of the event was delivering the toys – thanks to the following “elves” that helped: Colonel David W. Wray and the Valley View ROTC, Pastor Dave, James Avila, Zachary Coleman, John & Connie Lowe, Carole Korshavn, and Martha Mott.

View Artist’s renderings of  
Stained Glass windows

Saturday, January 7

At

9:30 AM

## Unexpected Chapters...

By Jack Pavelich

I've found the answer! Some of you remember the lyrics:  
*"How do you mend a broken heart?"*

... it's simple! You don't. I've learned in 2005 that God designed us to take all that we have experienced along the way, and make it a permanent part of us. Some good; and some not so good. But, He promises He'll never give us more than we can handle – and He promises to take all the bad things and turn them into something good. Alleluia!

*"How do you keep the rain from falling down?  
How do you stop the sun from shining?"*

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There are 650,000 poor and hungry people who make up a slum in Nairobi. Many are children; now orphaned and living on the streets. Our Church helps them to form "gangs" so that they can protect each other from trouble. These kids never thought they would be orphans. They never expected anything other than what once was a complete family. But war, and AIDS, and poverty have changed all that for them.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger will continue to support the needs of the poor in Nairobi; as well as others throughout the world. It's time we wrote a new Chapter – be generous!

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Lois Allbeck hosted some sauerkraut lovers for a New Years luncheon at her home. It was wonderful to be among so many who actually enjoyed the distinct aroma of God's fruit "croaking" in the pot. Kraut, and pork, and mashed potatoes with gravy filled each of us – making a gallon of sauerkraut practically disappear before our eyes!

Lois fixed me some leftovers to take home (few foods make for good leftovers – sauerkraut is one of them.) As I placed the food in my fridge, I took notice of the attractive plastic bowl which carried the gravy. "Hartz." Hmmmm... Not familiar with that brand. The small print stated, "PET FOOD CAN COVER FITS TWO SIZES."

It appears I've entered yet another Chapter.

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Our Old Testament Scripture teaches us about Tithes and Offerings. Lest I confuse you, these do not refer to the same things.

Tithes include the 10% of all that we have which is returned to God for His good work. There is no mistaking God's intention that we give to the church a tithe (a tenth) of all that we earn/produce/make/gather/find.

Offerings are what we give, over and above our tithe, for our good work. Our offerings support Edgemont School, Central City Lutheran Mission, Katrina, ELCA World Hunger, the American Cancer Society, the homeless person on the corner, new chairs and carpet for our Sanctuary, the Red Cross, and our neighbor in need across the street.

Most attempt to re-write this chapter.

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Discipleship is what we do after we have learned from the teacher, studied from the scripture, and prayed to the Creator. Discipleship defines your ministry in this world. Discipleship is the miracle made of your life so that others will see all your good works, and hear all your good words, so that they too will know the Good News!



Like Peter, you too can walk on water with Christ, but only after you've gotten out of the boat. Some Chapters require us to step out where we cannot see.

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So, I've learned that my life will be made up of each and every Chapter it has lived along the way. Like a good book, throwing out any one of those chapters leaves the reader wondering how I got from there to here. That might make a good Dr. Seuss book, but it leaves my life journey incomplete.

I pray that my, and your, not-so-fun Chapters will find us tougher, stronger, and more willing to take on the challenges we'll surely face tomorrow; and that our good Chapters will fill us with great joy – enough for a lifetime.

Amen?