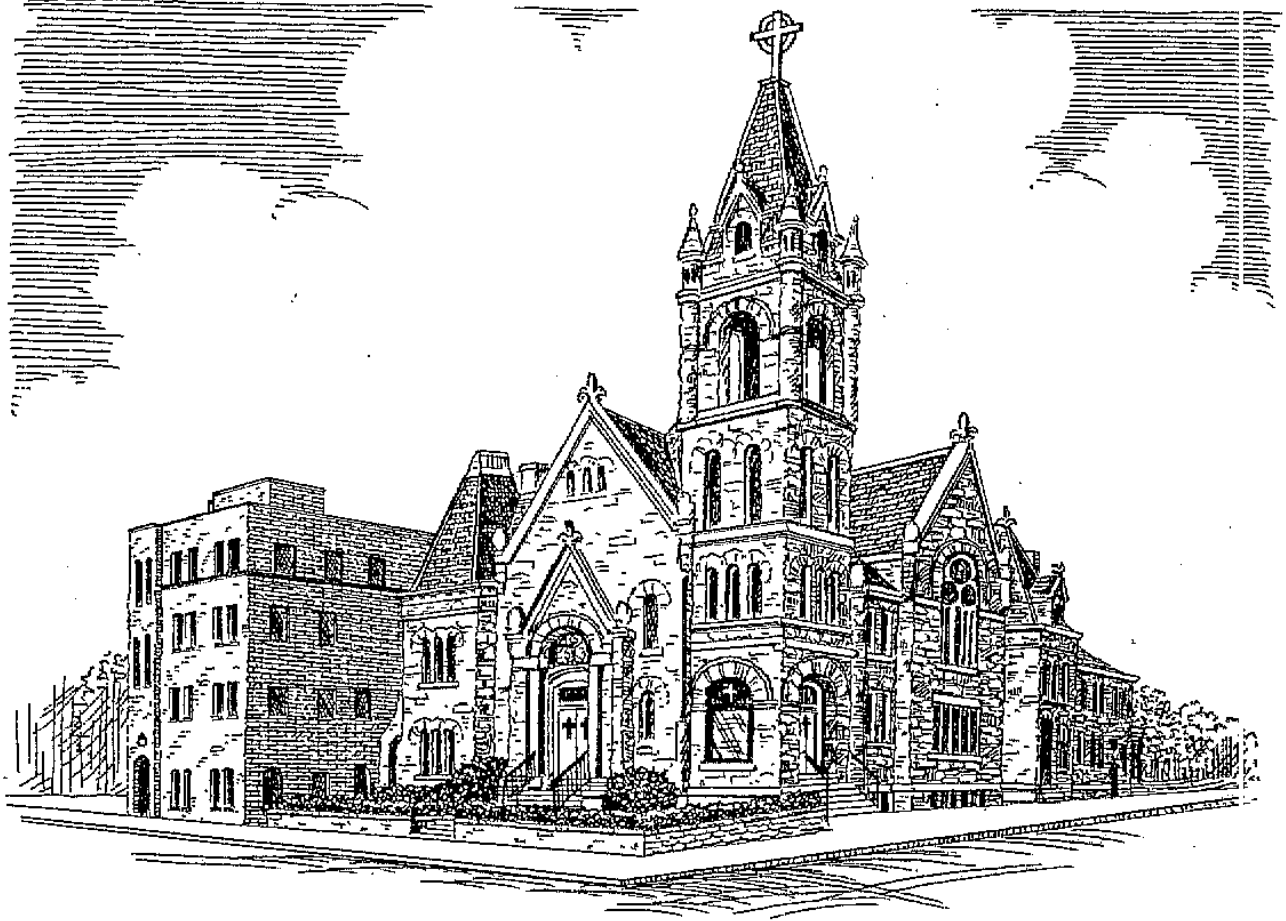


THE VISITOR



The First English Lutheran Church

*53 Park Avenue West (at Mulberry Street)
Mansfield, Ohio*

Volume 50

JANUARY 2008

Number 1

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 27, 2008

9:45 A.M. — Nave

→ Presentation and Vote: 2008 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly
Lay Voting Members.

→ Presentation and Vote: Proposed 2008 Budget.

Biographical information on our Synod Assembly candidates is on page 13 in this issue of The Visitor.

The Proposed 2008 Budget is on this center pull-out page.

Please bring this Proposed 2008 Budget page to the meeting with you.

*Only agenda items announced in this notice
may be considered at this meeting.*

From the **PASTOR**

Dear Friends In Christ:

Happy New Year! I pray that all of you have had a very blessed Christmas! As I write this in the month of December, it is still one week before Christmas. Our home is filled with excitement and anticipation: **CLARK, our Grandson is coming for Christmas!!!** And it just keeps getting better → ALL four of our children (Erin, Erik, Kari and Kirsten) and our two sons-in-law (Jacob and Joe) and Grandma Jancik and Aunt Carrie ... *They ALL will be coming! YEAH!!!*

This will be the first time in seven years that we will be able to have all four of our children HOME for Christmas! And then, after Christmas, Kristi and I will be traveling to Chicago to be at my brother's home where we are hoping that all of the rest of the Larson side of the family will be able to gather → my parents, my siblings and their spouses, and all my nieces & nephews. *Family and Christmas are Great FUN!*

Yes, it is great fun with all the family reunions and parties that happen at this time of year. *But, aren't you just glad that they don't All Last Forever!* It is wonderful! Indeed, it is Heart Warming to have family come and stay for a few days. But, what would happen if that time together expanded into many weeks, or many months? My guess is that even the very best friendships and even the closest families might begin to experience just a little bit of extra **STRESS!**

The reality is, that as we live closer together in relationships → the potential for stress in those relationships goes up. As our shoulders rub closer → sometimes we also experience a few elbows. This is true for any healthy friendship, family, marriage, Small Group, or Congregation. At FELC we are intentionally working to become a Congregation of Small Groups. That means we need to be intentional about learning how to DO → *"Life Together"* as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In close human relationships, conflict is simply inevitable. Conflict is neither negative nor positive. It is just a reality of human life (unless you want to live with a CLONE of yourself! --- How Boring!) How we handle conflict, however, can certainly have positive or negative RESULTS. We can learn how to either build one another up in love. Or, we can tear one another down. The Scriptures graphically call it 'devouring one another.'

So, can we learn how to better resolve the inevitable conflicts in our relationships? The Good News is that God's Word is filled with God's Words of Wisdom on this point. Starting the second weekend in January, Pastor Andy and I will be preaching a 4-Week Sermon Series on "***Getting Along When the Going Gets Tough.***" We believe that this will be a Blessing for each and everyone of us as we learn from God's Word how to better live together in God's Grace in all of our relationships. Come and learn and grow with us, as we grow together in God's Word!

***In Christ's Love,
Pastor Paul***

Getting Along When the Going Gets Tough

A sermon series about resolving conflict in the Body of Christ

January 13 -- February 3, 2008

Series Overview

Jesus once said that in this world we would have trouble (John 16:33). That trouble is not only manifested in the world but in the body of Christ as well. While many bring an expectation that the Church will be a healthier community the truth is that the Church is as full of sinners as the world is...albeit forgiven sinners. One of the implications of this reality is that there will be conflict in any church. When conflict is dealt with in faithful ways, it can actually serve as a catalyst for greater health and growth in a community. But when conflict is ignored or handled poorly it can be devastating, undermining the unity of the body of Christ. In this 4-week series, we will explore what God's Word has to say about getting along when the going gets tough.

Getting Along When the Going Gets Tough

A sermon series about resolving conflict in the Body of Christ

January 13 -- February 3, 2008

January 12-13, 2008

Title: The Case for Unity

Theme: *The unity of the body is critical and worth protecting.*

Texts: Psalm 133:1-3 / Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13, 29-32 /
John 17:9-12

January 19-20, 2008

Title: An Ounce of Prevention

Theme: *Preventing conflict requires that we invite the grace and power of God to work in our hearts first and foremost.*

Texts: Proverbs 16:2-7 / Ephesians 4:21-27, 29-32 /
Matthew 7:3-5, 24-27

January 26-27, 2008

Title: Handling Conflict Faithfully

Theme: *Conflict cannot always be avoided, but it can always be handled in a God-honoring, life-giving way.*

Texts: Proverbs 26:20-23 / Matthew 18:15-20

February 2-3, 2008

Title: Letting Go So You Can Move On

Theme: *Forgiveness is the only pathway to restoring broken relationships. Jesus not only models forgiveness, but His grace empowers us to forgive others.*

Texts: Psalm 32:1-5 / Matthew 18:21-35

OFFICES CLOSED

The church offices will be closed on New Year's Day, January 1. The Christian Day School is closed December 24 through January 1.

NO FIRST TUESDAY IN JANUARY

The First Tuesday group (Lunch Bunch) will not meet in January. The next First Tuesday lunch and speaker will be on February 5.

JANUARY WORSHIP

Saturdays:	5:00 P.M.	Worship in the Chapel (Communion with 1 st Sunday)
Sundays:	8:30 A.M.	Worship in the Nave (Communion 2 nd Sunday).
	9:45 A.M.	Sunday Church School for all ages
	11:00 A.M.	Worship in the Nave (Communion 1 st Sunday)
	11:00 A.M.	Proclaim! Contemporary, Undercroft (Communion 3 rd Sun.)
Wednesdays:	12:10 P.M.	Worship in the Chapel; lunch in the undercroft

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY:

- Jan 6 ➔ The Epiphany of Our Lord. The Senior Choir will sing at both the 8:30 and 11:00 worship services.
- Jan 13 ➔ Special Congregational Meeting, 9:45 a.m. Nave (Capital Campaign)
 ➔ Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Katilyn Stransky, 11:00 worship (Nave)
 ➔ Four week sermon series begins: "Getting Along When the Going Gets Tough"
- Jan 27 ➔ Congregational Meeting, 9:45 a.m. Nave (2008 Proposed Budget and election of Synod Assembly Lay Voting Members)

WHAT'S EPIPHANY?

What is Epiphany (e PIF ah nee)? Is it relevant today? *Epiphany*, a Greek word of *manifestation or appearance* means to *show forth*.

The celebration of Epiphany, one of the festivals of the church, originated in the Mediterranean area. Its purpose was to honor Jesus' baptism. After its introduction into the Western Church in the fourth century, the theme emphasized the visit of the Wise Men (Magi), as recorded in Matthew 2:1-12, who found Jesus on the twelfth day of their journey. Scripture records a dream, warning them not to return to Herod, which they obeyed. As they left Bethlehem, they told others about the Savior. They were proclaimers



EPIPHANY

or tellers of the story of Jesus.

Today, churches celebrate Epiphany worldwide on January 6 according to various customs and traditions. White altar cloths are used for the day of Epiphany, expressing the purity and joy in seeing Jesus. Green is used throughout the Epiphany season, symbolic of new life and growth.

The challenge of Epiphany remains. Tell the story of, or "show forth" the Lord Jesus in teaching, talking, living, thinking and attitudes. It begins with a star trek to Bethlehem to find Jesus personally. Then "showing forth" the love of Jesus through compassion, understanding, patience and long-suffering to humankind.

REMEMBER TO RECYCLE AND HELP OUR MISSIONS!

Take your recyclable materials to **Milliron Industries**, 2384 State Route 39, Mansfield, and tell them **ACCOUNT #480**. The receipts of the recyclable materials we donate in the church's name will be allocated for the five missionaries and missions we support: the Kraft, Schmalzle, and Sorge families, and Rytas Orphanage, Klaipeda, Lithuania; scholarships to Lithuania Christian College; and Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries, Malawi. A list of recyclables accepted is on the table in the Narthex.

- Global Mission Committee

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES!

- Sunday,
Jan 6 **Blood Pressure Readings**, 9:30 to 10:45 A.M. in the Narthex. Nurses coordinator:
Barb Hill, 419-756-4998.
- Sunday,
Jan 6 **Matins Choir rehearsal** at 9:30 a.m. They will sing at the 8:30 a.m. Holy
Communion service on January 13.
- Every
Sunday **Fireflies and Spirit!** children's and youth choirs rehearse during the 9:45 A.M.
Sunday school hour. Director: Becky Pittman.
- Monday,
Jan 7 **Men's Group** meets at 9:30 A.M. the first Monday of the month for breakfast at
Denny's on West Fourth Street in Ontario. Contact: Hal Simmons, 419-529-6586.
- Tuesday
Jan 8 **Prayer Shawl Ministry** meets at 7:00 P.M. in the Emmaus Room. Knitting
instruction and patterns provided. Contact: Karen Ellis, 419-884-1882 or Jan
Fisher, 419-589-2820.
- Wednesday,
Jan 2 & 16 **Workday Ladies Sew** patchwork quilts 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. on the third
floor of Luther Hall (bring a sack lunch). Tracing and cutting, ironing, machine
sewing, and tying. WELCA contact: Cheryl Lantz, 419-522-7500.
- Every
Wednesday **Wednesday Noon Worship and Lunch**, 12:10 P.M. worship in the Chapel;
lunch following in the undercroft.
- Every
Thursday **Proclaim! Praise Team Rehearsal**, 5:30 P.M. in the undercroft (please use the
East side Luther Hall entrance). Contacts: Kristi Larson, 419-756-3858, or Becky
Pittman, 419-529-3876.
- Every
Thursday **Senior Choir Rehearsal**, 7:00 P.M. in the choir room in the rear balcony.
Director: Dr. Timothy E. Guenther. (Please use the East side Luther Hall entrance).
- Friday,
Jan 18 **Friendly Friday Group**, 10:30 A.M. program in the Emmaus Room. Lunch is
served at 11:30; games until 2:00. Rides available. Coordinator: Margaret Battisti,
419-526-4381.
- Sat/Sun
Jan 26 & 27 **Food Collection Weekend.** The November collection totaled 6 bags of groceries
for The Salvation Army, and \$235 for our Wednesday Noon Worship and Lunch
Program. Thank you for your continued generous support!

How much of Eternity Is in what I am Doing Today?

I know that most of you have already heard me talk about how much I enjoy my **Daily Walk Bible**, but it is Good News that I just can't keep from sharing. For the longest time, my experience of reading through the Bible was filled with way too much frustration. I lost track of the number of times that I had (with all good intentions) committed myself to "Daily Bible Reading – With the GOAL of Reading through my Bible in a Year." It is a great goal, but I failed at it TOO many times to count. Somewhere along the way, I would suddenly run into a whole string of crazy busy days. Suddenly, I would realize that I was hopelessly behind! Catching-up would look so overwhelming --- I must confess that I would just give up.

But now, I have found a devotional Bible that has really made a difference in my life. It is called The Daily Walk Bible by Tyndale Press. What makes this one different? It is arranged with "*365 Daily Devotional Helps to Guide You through the Bible in One Year.*"

Does this mean that now, for the first time, EVERY single day, I complete my Daily Bible Reading Goal? ... NO! But there are two important differences in the way THIS devotional Bible is set-up.

First of all, the readings are not numbered from 1 to 365. Instead, they are divided by the days of the year and marked accordingly, for example: "June 1st, June 2nd, etc." So if you get out of the daily rhythm for a few days, or a few weeks, ...or even a few months, you DON'T start where you left-off and try to catch-up. This is where most of us feel overwhelmed & give-up. Instead, you accept that what happened and jump back in. If you didn't get to your daily Bible reading ... GOD still Forgives! So... Receive His Forgiveness & Grace! And Embrace His Gift of a NEW Beginning and Start Again Today! **It is the difference between letting oppressive Guilt defeat you and embracing God's Grace to inspire you! I prefer GRACE!**

(continued)

Secondly, and The VERY BEST thing about this great Bible, is the Daily Devotional Thoughts that preface each Daily Scripture Reading. This will now be my 5th year of doing this→ But I continue to find myself learning things I never knew! God's Word continues to come ALIVE in exciting new ways. I am experiencing the Blessing of growing closer to my LORD as I hear Him speak to the realities of my life as I read His Word. Pastor Nicky Gumbel in the ALPHA course states:

"God still speaks today through the Scriptures. He may speak to us as we read. The psalmist says, 'Your statutes ... are my counselors' (Psalm 119:24). That is not to say that we find God's will by opening the Bible anywhere at random and seeing what it says. Rather, as we develop the habit of regular, methodical Bible study we begin to find it quite extraordinary how appropriate each day's reading seems to be for the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. Sometimes the verse seems to almost leap off the page at us, and we sense GOD speaking through it."

I began this note to you with a quote from the daily devotional for MAY 14th: *"We must ask ourselves: How much of Eternity Is in what we are Doing?"* So many people, events, obligations, and organizations will compete for your Time, your Talents, and your Commitments in 2008. There are equally as many causes, and organizations, and things that will compete for your money. I would invite you Today to ask yourself: *"How much of Eternity Is in what I am Doing?"* Maybe, daily spending time with your LORD in His Word is an important way to begin.

Together In His Service,
Pastor Paul L. Larson

Read Through the BIBLE In One Year

So Here's the INVITATION!

- **First**, This is not about being a Bible expert and having all the answers. *This is about having a hunger for God and His Word. This is about being eager to learn.* If you want a weekly place where you can ask questions about what you have read in your Bible during the last week, I will again be meeting with you in our new Narthex Lounge on Tuesdays over the Lunch Hour (12:00-1:00pm). Bring your Bible and a Sandwich if you like. Invite a friend or co-worker. If Tuesdays don't work for you, there's another opportunity on Sunday Mornings (9:45-10:45am in the Emmaus Room.) Pick the time that works best for you! If your schedule changes, don't worry, just come when you can. This is a great time to ask questions and grow together in our understanding of God's Word for our daily lives.
- **Secondly**, If you would like to join me in this wonderful "*Walk Thru the Bible*", we have made arrangements so that you can purchase a copy of The Daily Walk Bible at a special discount price of \$20 for softcover and \$25 for hardbound. Check with the church office.
- **Thirdly**, Don't worry about understanding everything that you read. None of us do! This is not about Bible quizzes. This is about spending time with your Lord Jesus in the Gift of His Word. This is about GRACE!
- **Fourthly**, Don't worry about getting behind. I think almost everybody does. If you do get behind, (and most of us do) just jump back in again! Remember → This is about GRACE!
- **Fifthly**, This is the BEST thing I have done for myself to intentionally grow in my relationship with my Lord Jesus. I have every confidence that it will continue to be the BEST thing I do in 2008! Even if you can't join us for our discussion times, I know that you too will still be wonderfully BLESSED to be more and more in God's Word.

SPECIAL
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 13, 2008
9:45 a.m. – main sanctuary

The Congregation Council of First English Evangelical Lutheran Church is calling a special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 13, 2008 at 9:45 a.m. in the main sanctuary.

The purpose of this meeting is to seek the Congregation's approval for a major Capital Campaign Appeal to complete needed projects for property maintenance (for example: replace main sanctuary roof and related work; install undercroft kitchen fire suppression system; repair remaining west side stained glass windows; repair plaster and paint sanctuary).

The Congregation Council is recommending that the Congregation approves the hiring of RSI (Resource Services, Inc.) to assist us with completing this campaign.

*Only agenda items announced in this notice
may be considered at this meeting.*



Our Nursing
Home Ministry

COMMUNION SERVICES AT NURSING HOMES . . .

In order to provide communion for First Lutheran members who live in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, monthly worship services are scheduled in four locations with Communion Deacons assisting the pastors. All residents of the facilities are invited to attend, and members of First Lutheran are encouraged to come and accompany a family member or friend.

Tuesday, January 15

9:00 A.M. Elmcroft of Ontario
10:15 A.M. The Waterford
2:00 P.M. *Mifflin not scheduled*

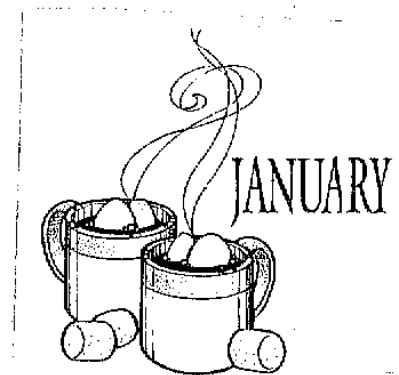
Thursday, January 17

9:30 A.M. Alterra Sterling House

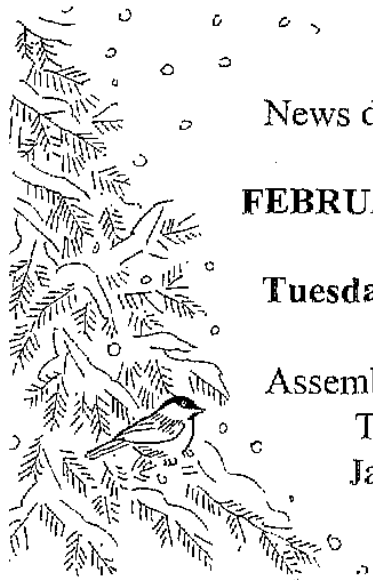
GRACE MATTERS IS THE WEEKLY 30-MINUTE RADIO PROGRAM of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The program is currently heard on station WHK-AM1420 (Cleveland), 7:30 a.m. Sunday; WKVX-AM 960 (Wooster), 8:30 a.m. Sunday; and WZLP-FM 95.7 (Loudonville), 10:00 a.m. Monday.

LUTHER FELLOWSHIP, TUESDAY, JANUARY 15. . .

Luther Fellowship meets on Tuesday, January 15, at 11:30 A.M. for lunch in the Emmaus Room. Cost is \$5. Our speaker will be Ted Ellis who will relate his adventures and experiences on their trip to Prague, Budapest, and Vienna last summer.

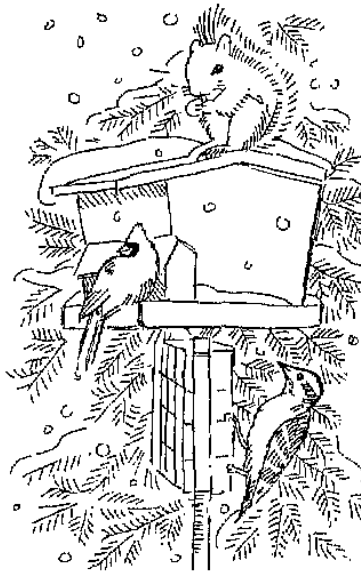


Sign up sheets are posted on the bulletin boards; please include your phone number. Questions? Call Carolyn or Lowell Weeks at 419-756-1776.



News deadline for the
FEBRUARY VISITOR
is
Tuesday, January 22

Assembled & mailed:
Thursday,
January 31



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 27, 2008

9:45 A.M. — Nave

- Presentation and Vote: 2008 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly Lay Voting Members.
- Presentation and Vote: Proposed 2008 Budget.

Biographical information on our Synod Assembly candidates and the Proposed 2008 Budget are in this January 2008 issue of The Visitor.

Please bring the Proposed 2008 Budget page to the meeting with you.

*Only agenda items announced in this notice
may be considered at this meeting.*

Biographies of the 2008 Synod Assembly Candidates

Vote for four (4) - 2 male and 2 female - at the January 27, 2008 Meeting

Andrew Elgin

(biography sheet not submitted)

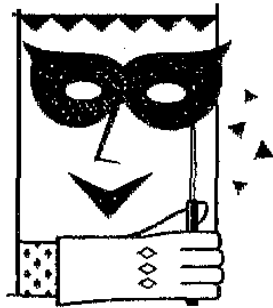
Paul Theaker. Paul is retired manager of the Mansfield office of the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services; U.S. Army veteran, served a tour of duty in Vietnam. He is employed part-time as cashier in a neighborhood convenience store. Paul is a Lexington High school graduate, and has Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Ohio State University. Church activities include 8:30 usher; Personnel Committee; Christian Day School Committee (Chair 2005-2007); church council (2005-2007); and communion server. Paul enjoys walking, gardening and lawn care, and record keeping and preparing minutes of church committees to which he belongs. He is the son of Richard and Betty Theaker, and a life-long member of FELC.

Roscoe Thompson, III. Roscoe is an antique auto restorer and deals in Internet sales of antique auto parts. He is a graduate of Lutheran High School West (Rocky River, OH), and attended Kent State University and Northshore Auto Technical Institute, Cleveland, OH. Church activities include Tech Team, small groups, Wednesday Noon Lunch, and chairman of the Worship Committee. Interests include antique automobiles and camping. He and his wife, Nancy, have six children: Roscoe IV, Tiffany, Isaiah, Victoria, Charlton, and Trevor.

Penny Ekegren. Penny is an RN - Clinical Research Associate for Cancer Clinical Trials at MedCentral Health System, supervisor of the Cancer Care Center. She earned a BSN from The Ohio State University. Church activities include Senior Choir, communion preparer, greeter, blood pressure clinic, and small groups. Penny enjoys camping, hiking, sewing, knitting, and cooking. She and husband, Ken (married nearly 35 years), have 3 adult children and 3 grandchildren.

Alicia (Keultjes) Schulz. Alicia is an attorney/Magistrate in Juvenile Court. She earned a BA from the University of Iowa and Juris Doctor from Northwestern University School of Law. Church activities include Matins Choir, Malawi Orphan Care Ministries, and cooking. She and husband, Henry, have 2 adult daughters, Claire (23), and Hannah (18).

Sherry D. Winbigler. Sherry is a housewife and business college graduate. Church activities include Personnel Committee chair, church council, reader, and office volunteer. She enjoys golf, bridge, reading, gardening, Kingwood Center, the library, and travel. Sherry and husband, Louie, have four sons, 5 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.



FASTNACHT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5
6:00 P.M. - Undercroft

Mark your calendars and plan to come and enjoy the food and fellowship!

Watch for details in the January bulletins and February Visitor.

JANUARY 2008 WELCA CALENDAR

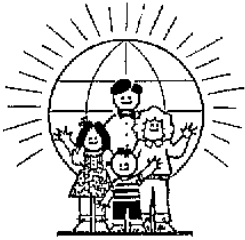
CIRCLE/EVENT	DATE	DAY OF WEEK	TIME	MEETING PLACE/TOPIC
SARAH	NO JANUARY MEETING			
FIRST TUESDAY	NO JANUARY MEETING			
MARY	NO JANUARY MEETING			
LYDIA	7	MONDAY	7:30 P.M.	Home of Carolyn Weeks, 730 Westview Blvd. Program: Book Review – "Left to Tell"
EVE	8	TUESDAY	7:00 P.M.	Emmaus Room Prayer Shawl Ministry
WORKDAY LADIES	2 & 16	WEDNESDAY	8:30 A.M.	3 rd Floor
PLANNING TEAM	21	MONDAY	7:00 P.M.	Emmaus Room

Funeral Dinners: Squad A, Margaret Battisti

Altar Group Workers: Nave – Pat Wells, Chapel – Cheryl Lantz, Contemporary – Jan Fisher

REQUESTS TO THE PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain provides prayer support to those with special needs or concerns. Prayer requests for members or non-members may be called in to *Cheryl Strohming*, 419-884-2260. Join our prayer chain ministry and become a member of the Prayer Chain! There are no meetings to attend; just make one or two phone calls and pray! Questions about this ministry? Call Cheryl Strohming at the number above.



JANUARY NEWS IN THE CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL

Happy New Year! The day school will begin 2008 on Wednesday, January 2. Our theme for January is Epiphany: The Wise Men. Matthew 2:1-12

Many thanks to everyone who helped with our Christmas program on Monday, December 10. A special thanks to Becky Pittman and Dr. Guenther for the many hours spent helping our children with the Christmas program!

A special thanks to all of our day school teachers who continue to give many hours of their time helping our children grow in faith! Also, a special thanks to the Christian Day School Committee who support our day school in every way!

Please continue to keep us in your prayers. Have a blessed New Year!

- Cheryl Lantz, CDS Director

LABELS FOR EDUCATION

REMINDER: **only the UPC CODE is needed** when cutting labels from boxes and soup cans from Labels for Education products.

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
LIVE-IN SECURITY POSITION

The congregation is looking for a person or couple (non-smokers) who can provide live-in security for our downtown church buildings. The position would include living in the two-bedroom apartment located on the 4th floor of Luther Hall. Persons who are interested should contact the Chairperson of Personnel, Sherry Winbigler (419-526-3795) or Gene Harsch (419-774-0247).

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULING CONTACTS

The monthly volunteers list is published in The Visitor and is posted on the bulletin boards. The following are responsible for scheduling the listed areas of volunteer ministry:

Betty Guenther, Staff Secretary

419-522-0662

Acolytes

Assisting Ministers

Greeters

Lay Readers

Luther Hall Sunday Door Duty

Roscoe Thompson, III, Worship Chair

419-522-7571

Communion Preparers

Communion Assistants

Sound Booth Operators

Gene Harsch, 419-774-0247

Ushers

Becky Pittman, 419-529-3876

Children's Church Leaders

Chris Cichanowicz,

Sunday School Superintendent

419-529-6593

Nursery Helpers

Gene Luedy, 419-526-4304

Pew Pad Gleaners

Ruth Sweval, 419-526-5090

8:00 am Sunday Prayer Partners

Barb Hill, 419-756-4998

Blood Pressure Nurses

Renee Blankenship, 419-632-6162

Proclaim! Ushers/Greeters

Proclaim! Communion Preparers

Proclaim! Communion Assistants

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

GREETERS 5:00 P.M.

Jan 5	Elva Bonser	Jan 19	Joci Kirst
Jan 12	Marian Owen	Jan 26	Elva Bonser

GREETERS

Carol Fry and
Margaret Runyon
Jan Swartz

8:30 A.M.

Narthex
East Entrance

USHERS

Larry Faith
Rebecca Faith

8:30 A.M.

GREETERS

Mary Shaffer
Marilyn Dinges

11:00 A.M.

Narthex
East Entrance

USHERS

Bill & Mary Schwartz
Harold Simmons
Dick Layer

11:00 A.M.

8:00 A.M. SUNDAY PASTORS PRAYER PARTNERS TEAMS

Jan 6	Lowell Weeks, Chris Cichanowicz	Jan 20	Mary Schwartz, Jane Starner
Jan 13	Rob Hogsette, Steve Ritz	Jan 27	Ken & Karen Frayer, Lowell Weeks

LUTHER HALL SUNDAY DOOR DUTY

	<u>8-9:45 am</u>	<u>9:45-11:30 am</u>
Jan 6	Cindy Russell	Tom & Jeanne Hillman
Jan 13	Betty Guenther	Rehm Family
Jan 20	Stan Cichanowicz	Mary Hujus
Jan 27	Henry Keultjes	Jodi Mumaw

11:00 ASSISTING MINISTERS

Jan 6	Annette Doklovic	Jan 20	Chris Kaschube
Jan 13	Greg Hughes	Jan 27	Bob McCready

ACOLYTES & CRUCIFERS

5:00 P.M. Saturday Chapel: A Linda Chapman

	<u>8:30 A.M.</u>	<u>11:00 A.M.</u>
Jan 6	A Trayce Prather	A Emily Blankenship C Chelsea Heidlebaugh
Jan 13	A Kate Hogsette	A Sara Hannemann
Jan 20	A Casey Kelley	A Erin Blankenship
Jan 27	A Sarah Ward	A Alissa Ruth

LAY READERS

5:00 P.M. Saturday Chapel

Jan 5	Jean Ridenour	Jan 19	Jean Ridenour
Jan 12	Kay McNaul	Jan 26	Kay McNaul

	<u>8:30 A.M.</u>	<u>11:00 A.M.</u>
Jan 6	Jerry Gallagher	Helen Anderson
Jan 13	Sherry Winbigler	Stacey Crall
Jan 20	Mary Hujus	Dan Shupp
Jan 27	Pat Reed	Annette Doklovic

11:00 NURSERY HELPERS

Jan 6	Julie Altman	Jan 20	Angie Kaschube
Jan 13	Shelley Shupp	Jan 27	Marianne Sweat

PEW PAD GLEANERS

Jan 6	Ronda Rehm	Jan 20	Viola Deems
Jan 13	Lana Dunham	Jan 27	Sharon Bowden

COMMUNION PREPARERS

Jan 6	11:00 am	TBA
Jan13	8:30 am	TBA

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

(regular communion)

	<u>Jan 6 - 11:00 am</u>	<u>Jan 13 - 8:30 am</u>
Bread Servers	Pastor & Assisting Minister	2 Pastors
Wine West	TBA	TBA
Cups West	TBA	TBA
Wine East	TBA	TBA
Cups East	TBA	TBA
Intinction	TBA	TBA

CHILDREN'S CHURCH LEADERS

Becky Pittman, coordinator

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTESSES

Property Committee

BLOOD PRESSURE NURSE

January 6: Jane Anderson

JANUARY ALTAR WORKERS

Nave:	Pat Wells
Chapel:	Cheryl Lantz
Proclaim!:	Jan Fisher

+ + + + +

11:00 PROCLAIM! CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Greeters/Ushers

Jan 6 Renee and Emily Blankenship
Jan 13 Cindy and Robyn Russell
Jan 20 Jerry and Lu Diday
Jan 27 Ted and Karen Ellis

January 20 Communion Preparer

Jan Fisher

January 20 Communion Assistants

Matt and Renee Blankenship
Tricia and Elizabeth Volz

Intercessory Prayer Team

Matt Blankenship and Kristi Larson

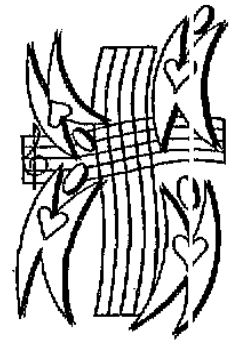
FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH E-MAIL AND WEB SITE

Pastor Larson	felcplarson@neo.rr.com
Pastor Jones	felcassociate@rrbiznet.com
Timothy Guenther (home)	tguenthr@richnet.net
Becky Pittman (home)	zpittman@neo.rr.com
Dot Blaney	felcoffice@neo.rr.com
Betty Guenther	felcbguenther@neo.rr.com

Please, no junk mail, cutesy stories, or chain letters. Reserve the use of church e-mail for important correspondence with the staff. **Visit our web site at: www.felc-mansfield.org**

COORDINATOR OF MUSIC AND THE ARTS . . .

December was a busy month! There are so many people to thank for all of their time, efforts, and talents. You are ALL a blessing to the congregation at FELC.



Thanks to Dana and Alissa Ruth who provided beautiful Christmas music on three different Sundays, and thank you to the Ward family for their wonderful string ensemble.

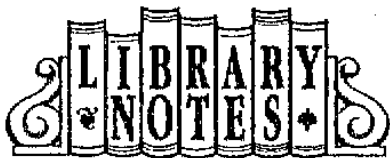
Our FELC bell choir is back! Thank you to Carol Pierce, Barb Hannemann, Pat Smith, Janet Shenberger, Cindy Russell, and Don and Beth Harruff for your time and efforts.

I can't thank our Sunday School teachers enough for all of your help with the Christmas program on December 16. I couldn't do it without you! A special "thanks" to Paul Ward for rehearsing and leading our youth bell choir. Katie Ritz, Haley Pittman, Drew Weeks, Stephen and Michael Ward, Erica Kick, Katie Stransky, and Kate Hogsette added so much to the service with their musical gifts. Our senior high did a super job with their skit!

"Thank you!" to Kristi Larson, Joy Jones, John Weeks, Jan Fisher, Mike Altman and Roscoe Thompson for your commitment to the Proclaim! service. Your weekly dedication is greatly appreciated. Last but not least, I would like to thank the Christian Day School teachers for all of their help with the CDS Christmas program on December 10. Your love for the kids is remarkable. The costumes looked great, and the pictures were wonderful.

Contact me at my new email address zpittman@neo.rr.com if YOU have a talent you would like to use to praise God!

– Becky Pittman



IN OUR CHURCH LIBRARY . . .

For your convenience, you may now check out and return library books, cassettes, videos, and records in the Narthex. Additional books are in the Narthex Lounge, or visit the library on the third floor of Luther Hall. We express our

gratitude to the church members who have donated books to the library in honor of a special person for a particular purpose or occasion.

– Jeanne Hillman



DECEMBER CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES . . .

Matt Blankenship called the Tuesday, December 11, 2007 meeting of the First English Lutheran Church Congregation Council to order at 7:05 P.M. Pastor Larson opened the meeting with prayer.

SENIOR PASTOR: Pastor Larson stated a new 4 week sermon series, "Getting Along When the Going Gets Tough" will begin in January 2008. He will attend an ELCA Head of Staff Seminar January 30 to February 4, 2008. He and Pastor Jones will attend a Northeastern Ohio Synod Professional Leaders Retreat January 28 and 29, 2008.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Tim Guenther thanked all who helped with the November 18 celebration of his 20th anniversary of commissioning as an Associate in Ministry.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Beth Harruff was approved as a money counter. The Lind Media Company was given approval to erect a sign on the south side of the current billboard in the Mulberry Street parking lot, promoting St. Peter's Catholic School, for six (6) months with a 30 day written notice to cancel and pre-approval for any signage change. It was stated that St. Peter's Catholic School is not paying any fees for such billboard and that only St. Peter's will be promoting on the billboard on the south side of the sign. Approval was given to hold a special Congregation meeting on January 13, 2008, at 9:45 A.M. for the purpose of providing information about a proposed Major Capital Funds Campaign. The Congregation Council recommended hiring Resource Services, Inc. to assist with com-

pleting a Major Capital Funds Campaign, contingent upon the congregation's approval of the campaign.

GLOBAL MISSION: Joy Jones presented information about a possible adult mission trip to Malawi during 2008 to work with the Malawi Orphan Care Ministries, with approval from Council for the Global Mission Committee to look into the possibility of the trip. Jeanne Hillman said that \$85.00 was sent to missionary Gloria Sauck in Kenya, Africa as a birthday/Christmas gift. The Thanksgiving Eve offering toward the Malawi Mini-Bus Fund was \$471.00, and as of December 9, 2007, the fund totaled \$10,737.

WELCA: Cheryl Lantz reported the Thankoffering Sunday worship services with Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preaching went well. The Advent Event was canceled due to inclement weather. More prayer shawls are ready for distribution.

PERSONNEL: Sherry Winbigler expressed appreciation to Shawn Volz, Tom Pasheilich and Bill Schwartz for their work in taking care of God's house during inclement weather. Council approved a 3.3% Cost of Living Adjustment for all lay and rostered staff in 2008, pending Congregation approval of the proposed 2008 annual budget. Compensation pay packages for Pastor Larson

and Pastor Jones were approved, pending approval of the proposed 2008 annual budget.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: **Matt Blankenship** presented information from the Finance Committee. Council approved the following items, to be paid during December 2007: the final payment of the loan from the General Endowment Fund in the amount of \$2,030.00; paying the approximate sum of \$13,000.00 to Guenther Mechanical for the new air conditioning and heating unit in the Chapel; and paying Warner Roofing Company the sum of \$15,392.00 for the cost of the roofing and flashing restoration project of the penthouse and elevator roofing structures in their entirety.

The proposed 2008 budget was reviewed and approved for presentation to the Congregation for approval at the January 27, 2008 Congregational meeting.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE: **Nancy Pashelich** reported Fastnacht is scheduled for February 5, 2008.

STEWARDSHIP: **Renee Ward** presented information, which was approved, that the 2008 Lenten offering benefit the Lithuania Ministries and the 2008 Advent offering benefit Malawi Orphan Care Ministries. Council approved changing the format from coin folders to envelopes for the Lenten offering in 2008.

SERVICE: **Becky Sarbach** reported that 12 "Support the Troops" care packages have been sent, with postage for 6 of the packages paid by private donations. She expressed thanks to Kay Leedy for her work with the

project and to those who donated items for the packages. Approval was given for the Service Committee to collect items December 16 to 30, in the Narthex, to benefit Harmony House.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: **Chris Cichanowicz** reported the Kraft family, missionaries in Bolivia, received blankets sent from Vacation Bible School.

YOUTH: **Annette Doklovic** said work is being done on the youth meeting space. The Senior High Youth Group continues to meet Sunday nights, 6:00 to 7:30, and parents are asked to assist with preparing dinners for the group. Plans are being made for a Senior High Youth mission trip June 22-28, 2008. Council approved youth group fund raisers during 2008, with regular updates to Council during the year.

CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL: **Linda Elgin** stated that the December 10 CDS Christmas program was wonderful, with 385 people in attendance. She expressed appreciation to Cheryl Lantz, Pastor Larson, Pastor Jones, Tim Guenther, Chris Cichanowicz and Becky Pittman for their work during the program. Donna Turney was approved as part time CDS secretary, 25 hours per week, and as a substitute teacher when needed. Christian Day School tuition in being increased 3% in 2008.

ADJOURNMENT: This meeting adjourned at 10:38 P.M. with prayer by Pastor Larson.

– Mary M. Schwartz,
Congregation Council Secretary



GLOBAL MISSION NEWS . . .

If you missed the opportunity to sign up for the Global Mission Committee, we

are still accepting volunteers. Our meetings are held in the Emmaus Room or the Fireside Room for about one hour. The next meeting will be Monday, January 28, 2008 at 7 p.m.

FELC Mission Focus for 2008 will be: Henrik & Patty Christopherson, Vicar Sihar Gurning, Kanyenyeva Orphans in Malawi, Nick & Shannon Kraft, Lithuania Christian College, Rytas Orphanage in Klaipeda, Lithuania, Bob & Denise Schmalzle, Sehlong Parish, and Brian & Barbara Sorge. Remember that recycling at Milliron Industries, Account #480, helps these missions.

With the special 2007 FELC Lenten folder offerings, we shared Christ's love in Lithuania by providing much needed scholarships at Lithuania Christian College. In the Christian setting, the students learn English, are equipped with important skills, learn and experience the love of Jesus.

In July 2007 the ELCA Global Mission Event was held in Columbus, Ohio. Four of our members, Cheryl Lantz, Jan Fisher, Linda Elgin, and Jerry Gallagher worked on committees. It was a HUGE success and people are still talking about it! We met and talked with ELCA Presiding Bishop, Mark

Hanson; Northeastern Ohio Synod Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton; former pastor and his wife, Dr. Jerry and Carol Schmalenberger; and speaker, Immaculee Ilibagiza (her book is in our church library).

Mark your 2008 calendars for the Global Mission Event to be held in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, July 17-20. This would make a great family vacation. If we have enough interest, we might hire a bus and share the bus expense with other area church members. Meet our Christian neighbors and learn what we can do for Christ.

Through the generosity of members of FELC, Shadreck Chikoti was flown here from Malawi and shared with us information about the Kanyenyeva Orphan Care project. An outpouring of school supplies, sports equipment, toys, and clothing was stuffed in his return luggage! We are so grateful to the whole congregation for the Christmas gift of a minibus to the Kanyenyeva Orphanage. Not only will the minibus provide transportation for the orphans to doctors and hospitals, but will also generate income to a poverty-stricken area.

With the 2007 Global Mission budget and recycling funds from Milliron, FELC was able to also send a Christmas gift to the Rytas Orphanage for needed supplies and educational ministry material.

What will God have us do in 2008?

– Jeanne Hillman, Chair

THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS

In February of 2007, our Congregation received \$1,600 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to spend on needy church projects:

\$550 was given to the youth through their fund raisers.

\$500 was given to Property to help defray maintenance cost at the church retreat center.

\$430 was given to CDS through their fund raiser to help purchase playground equipment.

\$120 was given to the Senior Choir to help purchase additional choir robes.

Any group within the Congregation that is in need of funds in 2008, please contact either of the Thrivent Congregational Coordinators, Larry Lantz, Mary Schwartz, or Carolyn Weeks. We can help you to obtain the funds either through a fund raiser or hands-on project. Please let us know by the end of February so we can start distributing the funds.

ALTAR FLOWER OPENINGS IN 2008

As of December 21, altar flower sponsors are not yet assigned for the following dates in 2008. If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, please call the church office, 419-522-0662, to reserve date. Cost per week is \$35.

January
13, 20, 27

June
1, 8, 29

October
12, 19, 26

March
23 (Easter), 30

July
13, 27

November
2, 16

April
6, 20

August
24

December
7, 14, 21

May
4, 25

September
7, 28



MALAWI

ORPHAN CARE MINISTRIES



Mini Bus for Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries, Malawi! The goal was \$10,000 by November 30. **The total as of December 9 was \$10,737.** Heartfelt thanks to the congregation for your generosity and caring!

Thank you very much . . . once again!!!! Thank you to all who gave to the Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries through your Advent offering. Your outpouring of support for this ministry is a blessing. It is a blessing for the people of Kanyenyeva; to be able to have food, to be able to teach their children about the reality of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, for the youth to be able to go to high school, to have hope for the future. It is also a blessing for us; to know that we are living God's command to help 'the least of these.' Thank you.

Recently, I heard about some misinformation regarding Word and Deed. I would like to take the time to clear up any misinformation that may be spreading. We had been sending all donations to the Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries through an organization called Word and Deed. (We did this until the board of the Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries prayerfully chose to no longer work with Word and Deed.) It is Word and Deed's standard practice to take only 10% of all donations to use for administrative purposes. At no time did they take more than 10% of any donations. I believe that Word and Deed is a reputable organization and I would work with them again if the opportunity arose.

Since the Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries is no longer working with Word and Deed, we have chosen to send all donations directly to the orphan project. We have been sending \$2,000 every 3 months. When we send our donations to Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries, however, there is a \$50 wire transfer fee. This fee comes from the donations given and is much less than the \$200 that Word and Deed had been using for administrative purposes. This is the only money that the Malawi Orphan Care Ministries uses from the donations given and only because it is the safest way to get the money to the orphan project. We plan to continue to send our money directly to the orphan project until we feel led by God to work through a different organization. If and when that happens, we will let everyone know through The Visitor. (Do not look for that announcement any time soon).

Shadreck sends the following prayer requests:

1. That God enables the teachers to teach the children the word of God in a manner that they can understand.
2. Pray that these children should be rescued from the powers of witchcraft. A lot of children are being taught witchcraft. This may not make sense to an American mind, but it is a spiritual battle in Malawi.
3. Pray for more resources for the nursery school.
4. Pray for the leadership of the HIV/AIDS clubs.

(continued)

5. Pray that the Biblical approach toward the issue of AIDS be promoted in Malawi.
6. Pray for the families of those who have lost their loved ones to AIDS.
7. Pray generally for the orphaned children, especially those who do not have a single parent and anyone to take care of them.
8. Pray that our nation should learn to love those that are HIV positive and that the

churches in Malawi should begin to address the issue of HIV with concern.

9. That we have enough food for next year.
10. That the women who cook for the children do not get tired.
11. That the children receive food that will nourish their bodies.

– Joy Jones

TIMELY ANNOUNCEMENTS

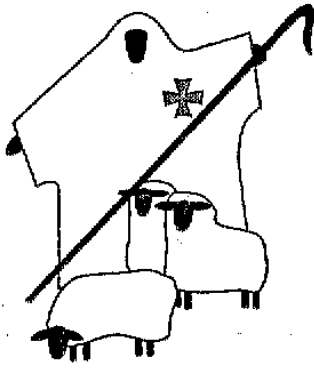
The Daily Walk Through the Bible Study Group will welcome anyone interested when the new cycle begins on Tuesday, January 8, at Noon in the Narthex Lounge. Contact the church office for a copy of the Daily Walk Bible.

Thursday Fellowship Group (formerly Forty Days of Purpose group with Tom & Jeanne Hillman) will meet at 10 a.m. in the Emmaus Room on January 10 and 24. If that time works for you, please come join us. *When Mansfield City schools are closed due to weather conditions, the meeting will be canceled.*

Have you seen the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog? It is the giving catalog of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, writes, "Christ's love is a gift. Share it with others." Example: A gift of \$10 provides: six water jugs for ease in transporting clean water; a mosquito net for a family in a malaria-prone area; ten chicks to build an egg business; a week of meals for a child orphaned by AIDS. The Good Gifts catalogs are in the Narthex and throughout the church. This is another way to make a difference **throughout** the year – it's not just for Christmas!

Have You Heard? Christian Family Broadcasting at: 88.3 FM - American Family Radio; 90.7 FM - WVMC; 95.1 FM - The River; 98.7 FM - K-LOVE.

WITHIN THE FOLD . . .



From Norm & Janet Cushing: "Thank you for donating the hymnals to Community Bible Church. It is nice to have a variety of songs pleasing to the Lord. God bless you and all the members who make the world a better place to live. Thank you again. Also, please keep our mother, Jean Cushing, in your prayers."

From Marian Owen: "I wish to thank all the dear people of First English who signed the great get-well poster for me recently. I appreciate very much your thoughts and prayers. Receiving it is so uplifting to one's spirit during recovery. We have wonderful, thoughtful, people in our church."

You've probably heard the saying, "Find a need and fill it." With a \$900 grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, **Jan Fisher, Barb Hannemann, Jeanne Hillman, and Cheryl Lantz** went on shopping sprees to purchase school clothing for local children. The clothing was taken to The New Store at 777 N. Trimble Road where volunteers **Marilyn Dinges and Pat Reed** were seen working. The New Store provides free clothing to students referred by school principals. Knowing the importance of children being able to dress like their peers, each child is assisted one-on-one by a volunteer.

From Angie Kaschube, Caroling Coordinator: "Thank you the 60 people who WOULD HAVE gone Christmas Caroling on December 16! Unfortunately, the snowy and icy conditions that morning caused us to CANCEL THE EVENT. I would especially like to thank Marilyn Motson, Gene Luedy, Joy Jones, and Jim and Suzanne Rippel for helping make phone calls in preparation for the caroling, and Pastor Kress and Betty Guenther for their help. A big thank you also to Alicia Keultjes who had already prepared delicious soup for the carolers' lunch and graciously invited anyone who stopped by the kitchen that Sunday morning to take some home! Love and CHRISTmas Cheer."

From Dr. Tim Guenther: "Thank you to everyone involved in the observance of my 20th Anniversary of Commissioning as an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA! Special thanks to Beth Harruff and her assistants for coordinating the receptions following the worship services. It is a joy to have spent the majority of those 20 years working in your midst as your music director."

(continued)

From Oesterlen Services for Youth, Inc. "I write this letter to acknowledge with gratitude your gift of \$249 which we have received at Oesterlen Services for Youth. Our programs of therapy for troubled children, youth, and their families are very dependent upon charitable contributions such as yours. We deeply appreciate your gift."

– Pastor Ronald W. Green, Director of Church Relations and Development

From Catholic Charities: "Thank you for your donation of food to Catholic Charities enabling us to assist the less fortunate of Richland County. We really appreciate your efforts to continue to supply food for our pantry, as the need continues to grow in our community."

–Rebecca Owens, Site Manager, Mansfield Office

Thank You!

Dear Friends,

Kristi and I would like to express our grateful thanks to all of our First English Family for your many gifts of love and caring throughout this past year. You have been a sign of God's Love to us.

Your patience, love, and wisdom continue to be a great gift to us in the mutual ministry we share together. Your friendships filled with joy and encouragement are a continued source of inspiration. We remember you daily in our prayers, giving thanks to God for the great blessing you are in our lives.

Thank you for the many beautiful Christmas greetings we received this past Christmas and all your wonderful gifts. Each has been so greatly appreciated! You have truly shared with us the JOY and LOVE of our Savior's birth!

May Christ richly bless you and your families in this new Epiphany Season as we celebrate the revelation of the Child born in Bethlehem. May the light of Bethlehem's star call each one of us to kneel before our Savior, where wisemen still seek Him.

God's Joy and Peace to you and your families in the gift of this New Year!

Love,

Pastor Paul and Kristi



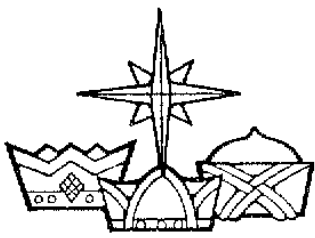
JANUARY 80+ BIRTHDAYS . . .

We honor our members who will be 80+ years of age this month! We bless them on their special day, and thank them for their faithfulness in our congregation through the years. God grant them joy and peace as they face the new year.

JANUARY

3	Mr. Thomas Woodard	3025 Possum Run Road	44903-7505
3	Mrs. Arlene Marlow	78 Massa Ave.	44907-1224
4	Mrs. Lois McCullough	70 Elmridge Road	44907-2442
6	Mrs. Betty Claypool	1510 Victory St.	44905-2251
7	Mrs. Evelyn Woodard	3025 Possum Run Rd.	44903-7505
9	Mr. Weldon Lemon	546 Connor Dr.	44905-2027
9	Mr. James Richey	Woodlawn Nursing Home 535 Lexington Ave.	44907-1502
12	Mr. Ervin Brune	2127 Crimson Rd.	44903-8859
17	Mrs. Betty Theaker	1671 Middle-Bellville Rd.	44904-1827
21	Mrs. Eileen Diffenbaugh	176 S. Linden Rd. #1	44906-2083
24	Mrs. Louise Effler	1179 Crater Lake Lane Columbus, OH	43085-1503
31	Mrs. Adelia Hautzenroeder	95 Brinkerhoff Ave.	44906

Editor's note: if you DO NOT WANT your 80+ birthday published in The Visitor in 2008, please let the church office know, 419-522-0662.



From the Pastor

FROM OUR VISITATION PASTOR ...

When I was Chaplain, I found many persons claiming to

be Christians were filled with doubt and fear. Because of these doubts and fears, they lacked the spiritual power promised by God's Word. If this was true of the patients I visited at the hospital, I am sure it is true of many of us. We pray, but are unsure if God hears our request. We attend worship each week, or as often as we can, but it becomes more a habit than a joy...We go through the motions of being a Christian, but we doubt that God even knows us.

What can help us to become more confident of God's power in our lives? I believe the secret is found in I Thessalonians 5:18. The Apostle Paul gives the missing element in our worship of God. "In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Note, it does not say to give thanks *for* all circumstances...rather, *in* all circumstances.

Let me try to clarify this issue of praise and thanksgiving. Merlin Carothers, a present day author, has written extensively on the subject of praise. If you discover one of his books, I would encourage you to read it. He tells the following story in one of his books. A couple came to Chaplain Carothers very upset. For months their daughter had been committed to a mental institution and diagnosed hopelessly mentally ill. Daily her parents pleaded with God on their knees that their daughter might be healed. Prayer groups around the county

were praying for their daughter, yet, her condition remained unchanged. Note: the parents had surrendered their lives to God, but they were focusing all their energies on the problem (their daughter's illness) rather than trusting that God could bring the healing. The parents attended one of Merlin Carothers' lectures when he spoke of the power of praise. Carothers pointed out that "in all circumstances they should thank God." When they had returned home the mother said, "It would be blasphemy to thank God for something so obviously evil. It just doesn't fit into my idea of a loving God." The father suggested that they try praising God since nothing else had been of help. They knelt together and the husband prayed: "Dear God, we know You love us and You love our daughter even more than we do. We're going to trust that You are working in her life that which is best for her. So we thank You for her sickness...we thank You she is in the hospital. We thank You for the doctors who haven't found the way to help...we praise You, God, for Your wisdom and love toward us." The longer the parents prayed, the more they began to believe God was doing what was best. The next morning, the hospital psychiatrist called: "Sir, there's been a remarkable change in your daughter. I suggest you come and see her." Two weeks later, the daughter was dismissed from the hospital. A year later, the girl had been married and was expecting a baby. She was the happiest girl in the world. Did the change in the parents' attitude make the difference? Who can prove it either way? Yet, it did happen.

(continued)

I believe the secret of securing the power Jesus promised his disciples and those who follow him is through the power of praise and thanksgiving. Remember the mother's reaction to the idea of giving God praise for her daughter's illness..."It just doesn't fit into my idea of a loving God!" That is the reaction of many..."How can God have anything to do with my broken arm or my wrecked car or my husband's horrible temper? I'd be foolish to thank God for something like that." Of course it doesn't make sense. Every act of praise releases the power of God into our situation and enables God to change them if that is his design.

We do not offer praise to manipulate God into giving us good gifts. Nor do we praise God because it makes us feel good. Rather, praise is an act of obedience. The Bible states, "thank God in all circumstances." Often the prayer of praise is done in sheer teeth-gritting will power. When we persist, somehow the power of God is released into our situation. First, in a trickle and later growing into a stream that will ultimately flood us and wash away our hurts and fears.

Praise is an act of faith. I believe God does have a perfect plan for our lives, yet, that plan may not be working itself out in our lives because we have failed to praise and thank God in each situation we find ourselves.

We can use any situation to His glory when we follow the three guidelines: 1) Surrender the situation to God...we are helpless in this situation God, but you have a plan which is perfect...we surrender to Your plan. 2) Trust the Lord and wait upon His action, for He is

your Deliverer. 3) We praise and thank God, right now, in whatever our circumstances, and we praise God for the solution that is coming.

Each morning before I leave our home, Alice and I share a time of prayer. Often, when we are facing an extremely difficult situation, our prayer is "I thank You, God, for things just as they are." I must say there is no power in the words of praise. There is no power in our attitude of thanksgiving and joy. All power comes from God, when we sincerely accept our situation and praise God in it. When praise is released into the situation, a supernatural force brings about changes beyond our understanding. Christ knew the secret of praise. He did so regularly. In John 11:41, Jesus is standing outside the tomb where his friend, Lazarus, was buried. Jesus looked up and prayed, "Father, I thank you (I praise you) that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out.

Praise and thanksgiving is a secret we can incorporate into our lives. I would encourage you, as I encourage myself each day, to give God praise in the circumstances you find yourself facing right now. You may have a difficult marriage...you may have problems at work...or you may not even be working right now...you may have a loved one who has special needs in their life...in everything, give God praise. Allow Him to work in your life. You will be blessed.

– Cloyd E. Kress, Visitation Pastor



We remember the families and friends of those who died Nov. 16 – Dec. 21, 2007:

John Tucker	November 16
Mary Jane Homan	November 24
William Laser	November 25
Virgil Frase	December 2
Elizabeth McLaughlin	December 6
<i>(mother of Amy Skropits)</i>	
Rosemary Shasky	December 6
Leona Miles	December 7
Mary Eggeman	December 10
<i>(sister-in-law of Glen Eggeman)</i>	
Chester Rader	December 17
<i>(brother-in-law of Virginia McBride)</i>	
Dorothy Corley	December 20

We pray for Christ's gifts of healing and peace to touch their lives during this time of loss and sorrow that they may be comforted with the promise of the Resurrection through faith in Christ our Savior.

PASTORAL ACTS

Funerals:	November 20, 2007	John Tucker
	November 28, 2007	Mary Jane Homan
	November 28, 2007	William Laser
	December 5, 2007	Virgil Frase
	December 11, 2007,	Rosemary Shasky
	<i>(Pr. Doug Pretorius, officiant)</i>	
	December 12, 2007	Elizabeth McLaughlin
Memorial Service:	December 24, 2007	Dorothy Corley
	December 14, 2007	Leona Miles

 **Memorials**
To... 

HONORARIUMS – GENERAL FUND

FELC Staff:

Cloyd & Alice Kress

HONORARIUMS – MAJOR CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT ENDOWMENT FUND

FELC Staff:

Mary Schwartz

MEMORIALS – BUILDING
MAINTENANCE FUND

Virgil Frase:

Wes & Sandie Volz

Mary Jane Homan:

Wes & Sandie Volz

William Laser:

Bill & Mary Schwartz

Wes & Sandie Volz

MEMORIALS – CHRISTIAN DAY
SCHOOL MEMORIAL FUND

Virgil Frase:

Fred & Mary Shaffer

William Laser:

Marjorie Wappner

MEMORIALS – MALAWI

Elizabeth McLaughlin:

Bob & Doris Enskat

Marty & Carole Hildebrand & Brent

Paul & Kristi Larson

Wes & Sandie Volz

MEMORIALS – MEMORIAL FUND

Virgil Frase:

Virgil & Audrey Frase

William Laser:

Bill & Jayne Boock, Tami, Brian
& family

Tara & Court & son

Bill & Pearl West

Leona Miles:

Narbey & Margaret Miles

Khachaturian

Dr. Barbara Reed:

Helen Anderson

Jack & Kathleen Ashby

Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Banko

Dr. & Mrs. Donald Beddard

John & Marcie Fletcher

Mark Gillig

Dr. & Mrs. James Secrest

Mr. & Mrs. George Siciliano & family

Mr. & Mrs. Donald E. Smith

Howard and Helen Shoup:

Marty Klupp

MEMORIALS – ORGAN
MAINTENANCE FUND

William Laser:

Helen Anderson

Tom & Dot Blaney

MEMORIALS – YOUTH MINISTRY

William Laser:

David Prather

MISSION STATEMENT

First English Lutheran Church, Mansfield, Ohio

First English Lutheran Church exists as a visible sign of the continuing presence of Jesus Christ through his body on earth, the Church. Christ's presence is made known through the ministry of this congregation as:

We regularly worship and experience through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the vitality of the Word, the assurance of God's acceptance through the divine commands and the earthly elements of the Sacraments, and the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in the faith.

We invite those unfamiliar with the saving grace extended to all who proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior to unite with us and to join us in continually familiarizing all with the Grace of God through our nurturing and caring efforts.

We reach out to the needs of our community and our world in compassion, generosity, and equity. We practice stewardship of our resources (time, talent, and monetary) as responsive expressions of the blessings we have received from the Lord so that the ministry of this congregation will be assured of continuing viability.

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CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Paul L. Larson, Senior Pastor
The Rev. Andrew W. Jones, Associate Pastor
The Rev. Cloyd E. Kress, Visitation Pastor
Dr. Timothy E. Guenther, Director of Music
Mrs. Becky Pittman, Coordinator of Music and The Arts
Mrs. Cheryl Lantz, Christian Day School Director

Dorothy Blaney, Parish Administrator	John Meyer, Custodial/Maintenance
Betty Guenther, Staff Secretary/Visitor Editor	Gordon & Amy Strohming, Security
Connie Stewart, Printer/Mailing Coordinator	Janet Kick, Nursery Care Worker
Gina Hutchison, Christian Day School Secretary	

First Lutheran sponsored missionaries

Bolivia, South America: Rev. Nick and Shannon Kraft, and children Madison, Tanyon, Moises, and Tucker
Nairobi, Kenya: Rev. Bob and Denise Schmalzle, and children Aaron and Jacob
World Mission Prayer League Missionaries to India: Brian and Barbara Sorge and family

CONGREGATION COUNCIL OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Matt Blankenship	Personnel	Sherry Winbigler
Vice President	Gene Harsch	Property	Shawn Volz
Secretary	Mary Schwartz	Service Ministry	Becky Sarbach
Christian Day School	Linda Elgin	Stewardship	Renee Ward
Christian Education	Chris Cichanowicz	SCS Superintendent	Chris Cichanowicz
Congregational Life	Nancy Pasheilich	Worship	Roscoe Thompson, III
Evangelism	Steve Ritz	Youth Ministry	Annette Doklovic
Finance	Rob Skropits	Women of the ELCA	Cheryl Lantz
Global Mission	Jeanne Hillman		