



Hope Lutheran Church

Enumclaw, Washington

# The Messenger of Hope

"Member of the Plateau Ministerial Association"

## Pastor Dan's Corner

The calendar changes to another year, and we enter the season of Epiphany. We often hear someone say, "I had an epiphany, and everything became clear." Epiphany can mean a sudden, intuitive leap of understanding through an ordinary but striking occurrence. Epiphany for a Christian means that sudden understanding takes place in the manifestation and awareness of God among us in Jesus Christ. The realization that Jesus IS God among us.

And in the recognition, in that moment of clarity, we understand that our God is a God who comes DOWN to meet us. God does not stand far off and leave us alone to work out our lives and salvation by ourselves. God comes down to be IN our lives. To walk the dusty and dangerous path of life with us.

God comes down. Down to be with us when we are down. Down to comfort us in our illness and suffering. Down to celebrate with us the joys in our life. Down to carry us home when our earthly days are through.

In this moment of epiphany, when we realize that, in Jesus, God comes to us, we understand that we will never be alone. Even when all seems lost. Even when all seems hopeless. Even when illness or anguish rob us of life. God always comes down to us in Jesus Christ. And that assurance comes wrapped in grace and love.

This past year has been a difficult year for many people. Words fail us when we are faced with deep and personal losses, lost jobs, or failed dreams. But God never fails us. Our comfort comes from our God who comes down to us. In the assurance of God's inseparable love for all God's children, we can be comforted in the promise Jesus won for us on the cross, a promise given to us in our baptism. A promise through God's grace of life eternal in Christ.

It is a promise we know is true, because it is a promise not made from afar by a God who sits and watches. It is a promise made by our God who comes down to meet us.

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# God's Sense of Smell

Did you know that God has the ability of smell? Several times in Scripture there are references to God smelling things. Let's examine those passages to learn a little more about the mind and nature of our God.

In Philippians 4:18 we read Paul's letter to the Philippians where he thanks them for their gifts they sent to him, calling them "a fragrant [Greek: odor] offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God."

In Psalms 141:2 we find the request, "May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice." As I write these scriptures I'm reminded of the Holden Evening Prayers.

Again, we find in Revelation 8:3, "The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints went up before God

from the angel's hand." It seems God not only hears our prayers, but he also smells them, and they're pleasant to him.

In all three of the above scriptures, prayers are compared to sweet incense before God. Do you consider that this is how God perceives your prayers? Does it make you want to pray more to offer up this incense before him?

God makes use of all his senses in getting across to us his message that he is pleased when we talk to him in prayer.

When's the last time you offered up a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God"? When was the last time you prayed?

Don't you think God would like to receive a pleasant "smell" from you soon?

Thoughtfully and prayerfully,  
*Richard Elfers*  
Sunday Forum Facilitator



## Thank You

The Rash family would like to thank our entire church family. Thank you for your continued prayers for Tim's full recovery from his fall in November. Thank you to all of the wonderful women that made meals for our family. These meals have helped so much, as we have been in & out of hospitals & haven't had a lot of time to cook. All of your wonderful cards & your visits to Tim while he was at various hospitals & the nursing home have helped Tim's morale so much during this difficult time. Pastor Dan & Brad thank you for your many visits to Tim while he was in Seattle & for your persistence even when he was in between hospitals. Tim would like to give a special thank you to those of you willing to hold a trash can! We feel so humble & blessed to have Hope as our church family.

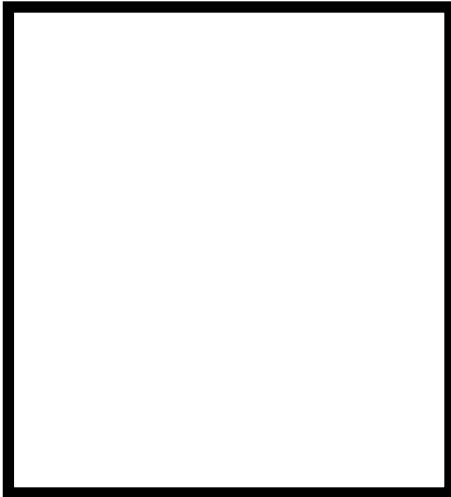
In His Name,  
*Tim, Tina Rash*  
& family

## Upcoming Events

- Jan 1 - Happy New Year
- Jan 2 - 4<sup>th</sup> Wisemen
- Jan 2 - Thayer/Smith Wedding
- Jan 4 - Olson/Powell Wedding
- Jan 4- Council Meeting
- Jan 12 - Relay for Life committee meeting
- Jan 16 - Fourth Wisemen
- Jan 17 - Messenger articles due
- Jan 31 - Annual Meeting
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### **Pastor Dan's Corner cont.**



Down to meet us in the waters of baptism. Down to meet us each week in the bread and the wine. Down to meet us when we gaze at the wondrous cross and know that Jesus, God who came down to us, always comes down to us, and is always with us.

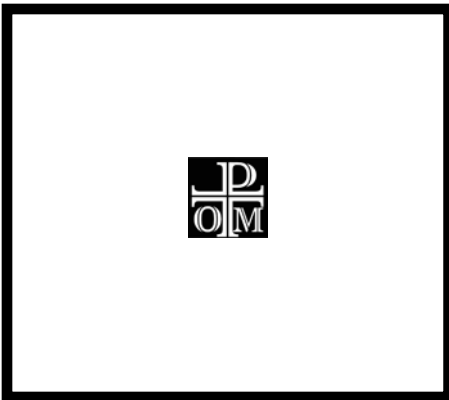
things will happen, one thing we know is certain, God's love for us will never fail us. And that is reason enough to hope and trust in God, to know that our days will be filled with grace. And that the light of Christ will shine on us. Thanks be to God.

And God will be with us as we enter the New Year. As every January 1 passes by, we are left to wonder, "What will this New Year bring?" While we hope and pray that good

**Happy New Year!**  
In Christ,  
*Pastor Dan*



### **Charles Berg Turns 90**



**The family of Charles Berg invites you to attend the celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It will be held Saturday February 13, 2010 at the Enumclaw VFW Hall. It is an open house from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. We would love for you to come.**



*Articles are due for next month's Messenger by January 20!*

## Council Meeting



*A detailed copy of the Council Minutes can be seen on the roundabout*

The Congregation Council met on December 7. The following was approved: November meeting minutes; & treasurer’s report. Also approved were: the organ being tuned and fixed up to \$1,500.00 Comp time for Pastor Dan when he needed to put in extra hours when the need arose.

**Old Business:**

**Inviting & Welcoming** – Six leaders have been chosen to work on an evangelism program.

**Endowment Committee** – Gene Kuhlman will replace Julie Plagens on the committee, also discussed was having a presentation during Adult Forum.

**Building & Grounds** – Harley Ruff will manage the building and Grounds while Erwin is gone.

**Financial**– Edith Evans, Anne-Marie Semke and Harley Ruff have agreed to

be on the Pastoral Support Team.

**Audit Advice** – Annie Schweitzer is willing to give Audit advice on the church’s fiscal system.

**New Business:**

**Church Use** – Pastor Dan was contacted by a representative from the Episcopalian church. They asked for the use of the church on Sunday late afternoon to provide a place of worship for about 10-12 people.

**Staff Evaluation** – Harley handed out a staff evaluation form.

**Church Use fees** – changes in the building use fees were discussed and adopted and passed.

**Time change for Sunday services** – Two suggestions were considered for first service 8:30am to 9:30am or 8:45am to 9:45am.

**Annual Meeting** – The date for the annual meeting was

discussed. Harley moved that it be held on Jan 31 after second service, it passed.

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm with prayer.**

*Agenda item deadline: Monday, December 28 by noon, Next regular Council Meeting: Monday, January 4 at 6:30 p.m.*

## Stewardship:

A review of the monthly giving to the general and mortgage funds (below) shows that the anticipated income is in line with the estimated annual budget adopted in January. The monthly figures are from December, 2009.

It is important that our commitment to stewardship be maintained during the entire year. Thank You!

	Giving Last Month	Expenses Last Month	Giving YTD	Expenses YTD
General	\$ 10,772.15	\$ 10947.56	\$ 126,657.07	\$ 112,205.67
Mortgage	\$ 2127.00	\$ 2,654.00	\$ 24,680.00	\$ 26,540.00
Other*	\$		\$ 3,288.92	

\*E.g. designated funds for MT’s, ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Relief, Memorials, etc

## **Bleatings From The Sheep Pen**

“What do sheep say to shepherds at Christmas time?” “Season’s Bleatings!”

### **Humorists from the Bethlehem Breakfast Club Radio Show**

I was sitting in a pew at our recent Christmas Program when all of a sudden a fabulous and funny Evangelism event broke out. We had singing barn yard animals, smelly shepherds, weary travelers, Heavenly Disc Jockey Starbird, self described as the Angelic Relic & God’s favorite radio personality, another relic as an audience cheer inducer, gossip girl angels, and more. The program was laced with commercials from Heavenly Ad Man Saint Jerome, had an audience participation contest of “Name That Tune”, had some wise guys dropping in, and Heavenly Radio Station HALO’s top roving reporter, Angel Skeeter. Toss in Anti Burger King King Herod and a girl named Joe, there were more characters than Carter has pills (dating myself I know).

But what fun. We had a Christmas story that unfolded from various reports, various reporters, throughout Bethlehem that was a feel good story, a good news story, a good news of the Gospel Story. With uproarious laughter and audience enthusiasm the good news story of the Gospel was shared to all and you know what? They loved the Story. Who said Evangelism, being Inviting & Welcoming in sharing the Good News, is never fun, only a duty we grudgingly consider and others avoid wanting to hear. Not that Sunday morning.

As the year ends and another year starts, we are excited, thankful, and positive that our little sheep pen is growing in numbers and in being more inviting & welcoming. New sheep are coming in and others are returning to our flock. We have a loving, dynamic, funny, knowledgeable, outward reaching new Shepard leading our flock. And most importantly, we have loving, dynamic, funny, knowledgeable, outward reaching sheep in our flock.... although maybe a little hesitant in wanting to share the Good News of what’s happening at our church, what’s happening in their lives.

But, there is coming a small group study that all of the flock will have available to them to show just how simple, how easy, how timely sharing the Good News can be. Stay tuned for the Salty tales as they develop. Until then remember the Gospel means the good news. It ain’t a sad song to lament but a happy one to share. Kind of like a Christmas Program that had a cast of 30 plus evangelists that were mistaken for comedic actors.

Greetings, bleatings, make that Season’s Bleatings from the sheep pen.

**The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. (Psalm 23: 1)**

*Jim Niehoff*



# Hope Lutheran Church

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### Our Purpose:

*"Making Christ known  
in our community by  
reaching out through  
worship, service and fel-  
lowship"*

*Hope Lutheran Church  
is a member of the  
Southwestern Washing-  
ton Synod of the ELCA*

*Their mission:*

*"...Spreading the Good  
News of Jesus Christ by  
empowering congrega-  
tions and church leaders  
to grow in worship, edu-  
cation, outreach, ste-  
wardship and other mis-  
sions"*

*Their website:*

*www.lutheranssw.org*

*Soli Deo Gloria*

## Phone Call to God

A man in Topeka, Kansas decided to write a book about churches around the country. He started by flying to New York and began working West from there.

Going to a very large church, he began taking photographs and making notes. He spotted a golden telephone on the vestibule wall and was intrigued with a sign, which read "Calls: \$10,000 a minute."

Seeking out the pastor, he asked about the phone and the sign. The pastor answered that this golden phone is, in fact, a direct line to Heaven and if you pay the price you can talk directly to God. The man thanked the pastor and continued on his way.

As he continued to visit churches in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Minneapolis, Den-

ver, San Francisco and around the United States, he found more phones, with the same sign, and the same answer from each pastor.

Finally, he arrived at a small church in Enumclaw, Washington. Behold - he saw the usual golden telephone. But THIS time, the sign read: "Calls: No charge."

Fascinated, he asked the pastor, "Reverend, I have been in cities all across the country and in many churches I have found this golden telephone and have been told it is a direct line to Heaven and that I could talk to God, but in the other churches the cost was \$10,000 a minute. Your sign reads No Charge." "Why?"

The pastor, smiling, replied, "Son, you're in Enumclaw now.... It's a local call."

## A Christian Is...

Martin Luther's delightful definition of a Christian..."A Christian is a child of the Holy Spirit, an heir to eternal life, a companion to the holy angels, a ruler of the world, and a partaker of God's divine nature. A Christian is a wonder of the world, a terror of Satan, an ornament of the church, a desirable object of heaven, with a heart full of fire, with eyes full of tears, with a mouthful of supplication, and with hands full of good works.

## Entrepreneur's Prayer

As I awaken with the gift of yet another day and prepare for the tasks at hand, I offer up this most ardent prayer:

I pray for continued clarity of purpose so that I may hold my vision steady and keep my focus on the needs and success of others, which in turn shall bring me my success.

I pray for the wisdom to expect abundance in my life, that it surrounds me and is available for the taking and to be shameless and unapologetic upon its receipt, for I deserve abundance. I pray for a cheerful countenance, be it clear or cloudy skies and that I may radiate and infect others with my positive attitude.

I pray for the trust of others that they may recognize my sincerity and true intentions so that we may move forward together.

I pray for the strength to fend off adversity and use my desire and determination as both weapon and shield.

I pray for the courage to carry

forth my convictions during the battle of business and to resist temptation to a quicker monetary result when such temptation compromises these things for which I stand.

I pray that I may be used as a lightning rod to collect the amazing ideas already present in the universe and when blessed with such inspiration, that I may be able to apply my talents and abilities to turn the power of thought into measurable advancement of my goals.

I pray to retain my childhood wonder so that I can recognize and revel in the small miracles of each day that others may miss.

I pray for an infinite supply of self-confidence for it alone fortifies faith, strengthens my resolve and conquers the largest enemy I will ever face - fear.

I pray for a compassionate spirit and the patience to offer those who seek my advice and my help, my full and undivided attention.

I pray for good health and a feeling of well being, and the continued desire to improve those areas of my physical life I may be neglecting in the name of my spiritual and entrepreneurial advancement.

I pray that today is a day of excellence and at its conclusion I can acknowledge and be grateful for the forward motion I have made and the growth I have experienced.

I pray most of all for the understanding and support of those closest to my heart, my family, that they will equate what may seem like endless hours of apparent preoccupation with affairs of business to what is at the very core of my being, that which drives me, for once I achieve what I have set out in its fullest, I will become that more complete being I strive to be.

It is for these things that I pray, for I am an entrepreneur.

*Jewel Diamond Taylor  
With thanks to Brian Carey*

### Kids in Church

\*A little boy was overheard praying: 'Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am.'

\*3-year-old Reese: 'Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen.'

\*A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service, 'And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?' One bright little girl replied, 'Because people are sleeping.'

\*A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, 'Would you like to say the blessing?' 'I wouldn't know what to say,' the girl replied.

'Just say what you hear Mommy say,' the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, 'Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?'



## STEWARDSHIP January, 2010

2010, just to put it in writing is, Wow! In January 2009, visiting pastors were helping us begin the process for calling a new pastor. They encouraged each of us to work together. After many weeks of prayer, discussions and working together, we called Pastor Dan. What a wonderful shepherd God prepared for Hope Lutheran. We look forward to a new year together.

2010, another new year. Another opportunity to be a steward of all that God has given each of us. What do you plan to do with this opportunity? This year will be different for many of us. Dear friends and family members have passed away; for some, jobs have been eliminated and some have retired. These are all major life changes. This is a time to remember to be a steward, to work together and pray for each other.

There are many opportunities at Hope to get together with others. WELCA, 4<sup>th</sup> Wisemen, bible studies, quilting, breakfast, Sunday morning's church, coffee hour, Sunday school, adult forum, council, a ministry team, cleaning inside or outside, visiting people at home or in assisted living homes, going for a walk or calling on the phone. The list is endless.

Thank you to each of you stewards of Hope. You continue to invite people to come on Sundays and share the good news message. Thank you for signing up to help with services each week. Thank you for continuing to financially support our weekly giving for the church, the community and for missions.

2010, another new year for us to be: Rooted in Grace; Growing in Service

God's peace, joy and love for 2010.  
*Kathie Thompson*  
 Stewardship Ministry Team

## Worship Schedule



**January 3 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Christmas.**  
 First reading: Jer 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20  
 Second reading; Eph 1:3-14;  
 Gospel John 1:1-18

**January 6 - Epiphany of Our Lord.**  
 First reading Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Second reading Eph 3:1-12;  
 Gospel Matt 2:1-12

**January 10 - Baptism of Our Lord.**  
 First reading Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29,  
 Second reading Acts 8:14-17; Gospel Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**January 17 - 2 Epiphany.** First reading Isa 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10, Second reading 1 Cor 12:1-11; Gospel John 2:1-11

**January 24 - 3 Epiphany.** First reading Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19, Second reading 1 Cor 12:12-31a; Gospel Luke 4:14-21

**January 31 - 4 Epiphany.** First reading Jer 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6, Second reading 1 Cor 13:1-13; Gospel Luke 4:21-30

### ANNUAL MEETING

**Our Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> following the second Service.**