

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

1 South Broad Street,
Middletown, DE 19709
(302) 378-3345 / treeoflifelc@verizon.net



STAFF

Jennifer Carlson, Pastor
Duane Dillard,
Director of Worship & Music
Yvette Warner, Sunday Nursery

COUNCIL

Gerrit Salemink, President,
Administration
Kim Watson, Vice President
Gene Zaiser, Treasurer
George Matz, Secretary
Mark Cilento
Bill Glass

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Children and Youth
Grace Cilento and Cindy Koch
Stewardship/Finance Gene Zaiser
Outreach David Watson
Worship & Music Sylvia Schill
Communications Kim Watson
The Seniors Group Jim Raun
Building Committee David Watson

VOLUNTEERS

Sylvia Schill Burning Bush
Dot Schreppler Copier
Mary Ellen Raun Worship Folder
Donna Parks Leaflet Editor
Nancy Nadel
Worship Assistant Coordinator



January 2007

Volume 1
Issue 4

Inside this Issue

Calendar	8
Discipleship	5
FYI	4
Lutheran Community Services	6
Lutheran Public Policy	12
Nurture	4
Outreach	3
Schedules	7
Staff & Committees	16
Thanks	11/13
Worship & Music	2

The Leaflet

Celebrating 2006, What's next in 2007

Pastor Jennifer

Much has happened in 2006. It was a full year for us at Tree of Life. Check out these highlights.

- Did you notice that we welcomed 22 members to share the faith journey with us.
- Already in December of 2006, there are 12 people waiting to begin our January New Members class.
- Our average weekly worship attendance in 2006 grew to 50 from 44 in 2005.
- And in the last six months of the year, only 6 Sundays was our worship attendance less than 50. That means more and more people are meeting God through our worship service. How Exciting!
- Consecration Sunday brought a 15% increase in estimates of giving for 2007.
- In 2007, if everyone meets their estimates of giving, we will have a balanced budget, minus the rent that we pay to the school. That hasn't happened since before I became your pastor.

Wow! What a year. God is doing work through us, as all of us have given more of our time, money and love so that more people can know about Christ's love and forgiveness for them. I encourage you to celebrate all that is new at Tree of Life, as we bring in this new year 2007.

Of course, the follow up to this is ... "What's next for 2007? Because we still aren't where we want to be."

Continued on page 2

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Praying for our Conference Partners

This month we lift up these partners in ministry from the Delmarva Conference of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA.

January 7, 2007 Baptism or our Lord

Spirit of Life Lutheran Church

Rev. Clarence E. Pettit

Office of Public Policy

Shirley Seibert

January 14, 2007 2nd Sun. after Epiphany

Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rev. John D. Ranney

Hilltop Lutheran Community Center

January 21, 2007 3rd Sun. after Epiphany

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church

Zion Lutheran Church

Rev. Greg Johnson

January 28, 2007 4th Sun. after Epiphany

Community Lutheran Church

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

Rev. Jennifer Carlson

Would you like to be a part of the

Worship & Music Committee?

We meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday

of each month at

TOL beginning at 7 p.m.

Well, the answer is that there is a plan. Some of you may remember that we had a ministry review with Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission in April. That review gave us some insights and some direction, which helped our committees and teams develop and create goals for our congregation.

Our areas of focus for 2007 are the following...

- Creating and growing **Discipleship**
- Growing our **Evangelism and Outreach** to the community.
- Improve **Communication** both within the congregation and outside of the congregation
- Grow our **Stewardship**
- Build **Leaders**

If you would like to see the in-depth plans for these areas, check out the back table at worship, and take home a copy to read.

HUT ON FIRE

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for GOD to rescue him and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed to be forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect himself from the elements, and to store his few possessions.

One day, after scaveng-

ing for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened, and everything was lost.

He was stunned with disbelief, grief, and anger. "GOD, how could you do this to me?" he cried.

Early the next day he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him.

"How did you know I was here?" Asked the

weary man of his rescuers.

"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

It's easy to get discouraged when things are going bad, but we shouldn't lose heart, because GOD is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering.

Remember, the next time your little hut seems to be burning to the ground. It just may be a smoke signal that summons the grace of GOD.



Lutheran Campus Ministry

Greetings and Happy New Year to you from Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware. Of course, it's actually December 7th as I sit here writing to you. We've just begun Advent. A time to reflect, to ponder, to prepare for the new beginning given us in the birth of our Savior.

The Directing Committee at LCM has been busy this past fall defining and redefining our goals for this ministry and formulating an infrastructure to accomplish them. There are four major committees that reflect the basic components of the mission; program, public relations, property and finance. The various responsibilities, events and activities that comprise each of these compartments have been further divided into subcommittees. This structure will enable us to be more efficient and effective. But

we need your help.

If your Advent journey has led you to look for a new way to spend some of your valuable free time, we invite you to consider spending it with us. Just tell us where your interests lie. We would love to find a place for you.

In preparing for the 2008/09 Synod budget request, it became clear that we need to plan for Capital Improvement, raise the rent for students living in the Bonnehoffer House, which is located on the property right next to Paul's Chapel and increase our fund-raising receipts by reaching out to all of the Lutheran Congregations in New Castle County.

Many of the county Lutheran Churches have parishioners attending the University of Delaware. Are they involved in the Lutheran Student Association? Please, invite them to Paul's Chapel for the Tuesday evening meal and worship. Would they like to attend a Sunday

morning service? They can join the group for a ride to St. Paul's. Are they looking to be involved in an outreach ministry? They could tutor on Thursday evenings at St. Paul's or they could get involved in the FISH food distribution program. The LSA group recently raised over \$10,000.00 to keep this program going and to establish a distribution site in Middletown. For more information contact us at (302) 368-3078.

*Karen Janus
LCM President
Shirley Glines
LCM Secretary*

OUTREACH

Cards for our Military Personnel

Whether you are for or against the war, our guys and gals over there need to hear often from home. I can only imagine what it is like to be in the service and stationed overseas. I would imagine there's nothing like getting mail from the US! Below is a website that is sponsored by Xerox and is free for anyone who would like to take about 30 seconds of their time to send a card to let our military personnel know we are thinking of them.

If you go to this web site, www.LetsSayThanks.com, you can pick out a "thank you" card (that school children all over the country have designed) and a message, and Xerox will print it and send it to a soldier who is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to some member of the armed services. Please send a card. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our soldiers received a bunch of these? There is no registration and no cost.

SOUPER BOWL

January is our month for the **SOUPER BOWL** which aids our partner in hunger, Lutheran Community Services (LCS). We are collecting money for LCS so that they can help low income families. The LCS Food Pantry buys food from the Food Bank of Delaware for 18 cents/pound. For every dollar you give, they can buy 4 to 5 cans of food (soup, vegetables, fruit, etc.). It would be great if you could make a donation to the SOUPER BOWL to help those in need.

Grocery Club

Lutheran Community Services wants to expand their programs to Middletown. The Grocery Club is a food distribution program to families in need. We are in the beginning stages of establishing our 'Grocery Club' program here at Tree of Life. This program is a great way for Tree of Life to help families in the MOT area in need of assistance. We need volunteers who would be willing to help out half a day a month. If you are interested or need more information, please contact Johanna Salemink.



Change of Address

Pastor and Mrs. Burkins have moved. Below is their new address:

Rev. Roger and Louise Burkins
1911 Kestrel Court
Lancaster, PA 17603

Epiphany

January 6th is observed as a church festival in commemoration of the coming of the Magi to Jesus at Bethlehem.



NURTURE



Newsletter Assembly

Interested in helping assemble the newsletter? We meet on the last Tuesday of each month from **10 a.m. to Noon.**

Seniors Group

Lunch, fun, fellowship and sharing happened for 23 people on Dec. 14. Four visitors joined in our sharing of memorable Thanksgiving and Christmas experiences. Those memories were so enthusiastically shared that we ran out of time. There is more sharing to be done.

Several "business" matters were attended to: the seniors group will distribute soda cans (clean, of course) with a label "Lutheran World Relief / Dakar Fund." Your loose change will be collected and forwarded to LWR at year's end. A small steering committee is being formed to better expedite plans and a contest to select a name for the group is underway. A grand prize of a Wrigley's chewing packet will be awarded the winner.

The next gathering of the clan will be a visit to the Delaware Art Museum on January 11, 2007. More details will follow at a later date.

Theological Seminary at Albright Senior Fellow, our peers. Gettysburg. He too has Albright Institute of Archaeological Research. He too is a Ph.D. graduate from Graduate Theological Seminary at Berkeley. He is an internationally recognized authority on Jeremiah and is the author of the three volume *Jeremiah, A New Translation with Introductions by Anchor Bibles*. He is also fellow at Clare University, 2004; NEH-

The 2007 Lay School of Theology at Gettysburg will be from July 29 to August 5. I look forward to seeing you there as well as the friends I made in the last three years, *Peace and Joy in the New Year,* Shirley Seibert

He too has Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (ASOR), Jerusalem; 2005 Visiting Professor of Old Testament, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai, India. He did not lecture as the others, but gave us printed copies of his lectures, which he read to us. It was probably just as well as we could study them and discuss at length with

Lutheran Community Services Donations

This past month Tree of Life donated 75 items to the food banks of LCS. Thank you to all who have participated—we are making a great difference many lives.

Donated this month:

13 Boxes of pasta	1 box hamburger helper
13 jars of spaghetti sauce	1 box of rice
3 boxes of cereal	1 jar marshmallow cream
6 pkgs of Ramen noodles	1 can tuna fish
1 box pancake mix	4 cans chicken broth
11 cans vegetables	1 box potatoes
1 box crackers	1 jar mayonnaise
2 boxes gelatin dessert	1 jar gravy
5 cake mixes	3 cans soup
1 box oatmeal	2 boxes stuffing mix
1 bottle coffee creamer	2 containers of sprinkles

Thank you **Everyone.**

please do not donate items in glass—they are heavy and break easily

January 2007, Lutheran Office on Public Policy

Rev. Sandy Macey, Chaplain of Gettysburg Seminary Lay School of Theology in 2006, asked me when it ended if I would write an article about the benefits and enjoyment of the week we studied and worshiped together. Pastor Sandy was a member of St. Mark's as a registered nurse when God called her to a change in careers. She answered that call by graduating from Gettysburg Seminary as a pastor.

I have been attending Lay School for three years. I am sorry I waited so long to begin my journey in a program that provides opportunity for worship, fellowship and the beautiful Seminary Camps and the surrounding areas of Gettysburg. I would like for more Delawareans to also enjoy this experience. In the three years

that I attended, there were only two of us from Delaware. There are three classes each day. The speakers come from various backgrounds. The 2006 Lay School of Theology, in its 42nd year, was devoted to the topic, Fumed and Informed.

The Rev. H. George Anderson served as the Bishop of the ELCA from 1995 to 2001. He was previously president of both Luther College and Southern Seminary. He is known as a translator and author of many works on Lutheran history. I loved his lectures. There were a number of schisms in the early church in the United States. I had purchased his book, *A God Time to be a Church, a Conversation with Bishop H. George Anderson*. I remembered to take it with me for his signature.

The Rev. Dr. Duane H. Larson served as Assistant Professor of System-

atic Theology at Gettysburg Seminary. He earned his Ph.D. at Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, California. He also studied at the University of Minnesota and Oxford University Oxford, England. He hazarded in many capacities at the synod call, national and international levels in various capacities as well as multiple community organizations. He co-chairs the Board of Directors of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, serves on the board of Directors of the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, France, partners with the Africa Religious Health Project (ARHAP) in South Africa. Dr. Larson has edited and authored several books and numerous articles. He gave fantastic lectures with many questions as well as answers.

The last presenter was Dr. Jack Lndborm, Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Lutheran

DISCIPLESHIP

Membership Classes beginning!

Interested in becoming a member at Tree of Life Lutheran? Join us for our first meeting of our 6 week class on Monday, January 22, 2007, 7 p.m. at TOL. We will plan our next 5 meetings with everyone present at that meeting.

Questions???

Talk to Pastor Jennifer .

Looking for a small group Bible Study?

Looking to strengthen your faith while connecting with other people? Join a small group! **What's a small group?** A group of 6 –8 people who commit to one another to meet weekly, study the bible and pray for one another.

New groups are beginning in January 2007.

Interested? Talk to Pastor Jennifer

PoWeR SuRGe
What is it?

- P Pray daily
- O
- W Worship Weekly
- E
- R Read the Bible
- S Serving Others
- U
- R Relating to your church
- G Give
- E

Youth Group

(for those in 7th grade through 12 grade)

Game Night Continues. Join us!

Friday, January 12, 2007
7 p.m. At TOL

This month: video games

Roller or Ice Skating

Saturday, January 27

Meet at TOL at 12:15 p.m. and we'll travel to either ...

U of D ice arena (1-3 p.m.) Or Christiana Skating Center (1-4 p.m.) Bring \$12 for admission and additional money for snacks.

Contact Sylvia Schill or Pastor to sign-up.

Confirmation (Grades 7 and 8)

Check our January schedule...

January	7	The Apostle's Creed: Article Two
	21	The Apostle's Creed: Article Three
February	11	Baptismal Promises: Hear the Word (How to..

A Hilltop Holiday Report

By the time you read this report on the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday transactions at the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, your presents will have been opened, the wrapping thrown away, and maybe even those odd gifts returned for something more... practical!

All that aside, we at the Hilltop Center extend a huge thank you for your participation in the Thanksgiving Basket and Christmas Gift drives in November and December. The results for the Christmas Gifts are still a couple of days away from this writing, so they won't be included in this report. However, we are pleased to announce that the combined contributions of all Lutheran Churches and some local businesses made it possible for us to feed 300 families with full Thanksgiving meals this year. That includes turkeys and all of the trimmings. That is a fantastic effort and wonderful accomplishment. Thanks to everyone who contributed in some way to this successful drive.

It might be just past Christmas, but mark your calendar now for the annual Hilltop Super Stars competition coming on March 3rd starting at 7 p.m. at the Wilmington YMCA. An early announcement was mailed to your congregation and more will be coming shortly.

Thanks again for a very successful 2006 and here's to an even better 2007!

And oh yeah, HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

*The Board of Directors
Hilltop Lutheran
Neighborhood Center*

Walk Run T-Shirts In Africa

For the last few years, LCS has tried to get T-shirts left over from the September Hunger Walk Run events into the hands of folks less fortunate than ourselves. American-style T-shirts are highly prized throughout the world, so two years ago the excess T-shirts went to an or-

phanage in Poland. This year, they went to Tanzania with Phyllis Franklin Bierstedt of Good Shepherd. Phyllis said the trip there was truly an inspiring experience. She was touched at how much the Lutheran Church is helping people in Tanzania.

Phyllis took the Walk Run T-shirts (about 75) and other supplies donated by Sunday School children from the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd on her trip to the Uuwo community in the Northern part of Tanzania, which is on the side of Mount Kilimanjaro. The T-shirts were given to the pastor who plans to give them to the needy members of his congregation. Within this congregation there are 158 orphans due to AIDS.

According to Phyllis, the Lutheran Church in Tanzania is alive and growing. Church services are

Continued on page 10

and is well aware of the cally designed to help mortgage or who need problem. That's why we those who need help the asked the Laffey-McHugh most - people who are secure decent housing. In Foundation, a local phil- spending 50 or more per- 2006, LCS helped more anthropic organization, cent of their incomes on than 500 people with its to help us fund our "2007 their housing needs. Our housing programs. Critical Need Housing help comes in the form of Program." They obliged zero interest loans or with a \$10,000 grant. grants to those who are This program is specifi- behind in their rent or

Dear friends at Tree of Life,
Thank you so much for your donation of 8 turkey baskets to Lutheran Community Services!
The beautifully decorated boxes were given to 8 families in need. During the holiday season, many of our clients look forward to cooking or hosting a holiday meal. The baskets you donated allowed 8 families to do just that!
By sharing your food & artistic talents, you made it easier for those who have none. You help us achieve

our mission of "Sharing God's blessings by helping others in need."

Your kindness is appreciated very much.

Thank you again.

Peace & Joy,
Lisa Weifenbach
Lutheran Community Services

Continued from page 6

in Swahili. On Reformation Sunday in the Uuwo Lutheran Church her group joined the local congregation singing "A Mighty Fortress" in Swahili accompanied by a brass band. During the service the gifts from Delaware were mentioned and a round of applause was given in appreciation for them. Phyllis was deeply moved to be a part of this sharing of the bounty and expressions of love that God has provided.

2007 Volunteer Appreciation Tea Planned

The folks at LCS love their volunteers. To show their appreciation, the staff is planning their second annual Volunteer Appreciation Tea and scheduled it for 1:30 pm Sunday **February 25**, at Grace Lutheran Church in Hockessin. All volunteers, past and present,

will be invited. So if you are a volunteer, put it on your calendar. If you're not a volunteer, become one! Call **654 8886**.

Support Comes From Many Quarters

Most of the 500,000 pounds of food that LCS distributes to low income people in our area is purchased from the Food Bank of Delaware. The prices are low but when you purchase that much food it adds up! So we are always excited to get gifts of food through food drives, especially during the holidays when the need is so great. First and foremost, we want to thank the Lutheran churches, many of which make regular, generous collections for the LIFE (Lutherans Involved in Food Emergencies) program. But we also get contributions from other non-Lutheran churches, too. This year, we have

been blessed with gifts of food from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox, United Methodist Ebenezer, and McCabe Peninsula United Methodist, to name a few. Tatnall School delivered two truck loads in the last few weeks. On the corporate side, Dupont (through Days of Caring) and Citibank made contributions. Other gifts this year have come from the United Auto Workers, 1401 Condo Association, the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, and the Employee Association of the Wilmington Veterans Hospital.

Laffey-McHugh Funds LCS Critical Needs Housing Program

You may have read the recent news articles about how the poor are having to pay larger and larger percentages of their meager incomes for rent. LCS is on the front lines of the battle to find a solution

JANUARY SCHEDULES

Acolyte

Jan. 7
Jan. 14
Jan. 21
Jan. 28

Kristian Cilento
Maureen Salemink
Ray Van Dame
Vincent Salemink



Reader

Jan. 7
Jan. 14
Jan. 21
Jan. 28

Nancy Nadel
Deb Trovinger
Jim Pileggi
Dallas Dean



Ushers

Jan. 4
Jan. 14
Jan. 21
Jan. 28

Bruce Blair / George Matz
Bill Glass / Bob Trovinger
Mark Cilento / Gerrit Salemink
Fred Jahn / Werner Schiedt



Fellowship

Jan. 7
Jan. 14
Jan. 21
Jan. 28

Mary Jane Schiedt
Mark Cilento
Sarah Frndak
Carolyn Lewis



Children's Church

Jan. 7
Jan. 14
Jan. 21
Jan. 28

Johanna Salemink
Donna Lintz
Renee Baker
Donna Lintz



January 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship-BME Noon Choir - TOL Noon Outreach Team - TOL 6:30 p.m. Confirmation - TOL	8	9	10 7 p.m. Worship and Music - TOL	11	12 7 p.m. Youth Group game night - TOL	13
14 9:15 a.m. Sunday School-BME 10:30 a.m. Worship-BME Noon Choir - TOL Kid's Club Bowling 3:30 p.m. Conference mtg	15	16	17 7 p.m. Stewardship - TOL	18	19	20 9 a.m. Council Retreat - TOL
21 9:15 a.m. Sunday School-BME 10:30 a.m. Worship-BME Noon Choir - TOL Noon Church Council - TOL 6:30 p.m. Confirmation - TOL	22	23	24 7 p.m. Worship and Music - TOL	25	26	27 Youth Group Ice or Roller Skating
28 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship-BME Noon Choir - TOL Noon Children & Youth Comm. - TOL	29	30	31			

Calendar

Help us keep the calendar up to date! Write in the dates on the church calendar when your committee, team, social group, bible study etc. will meet. The calendar is located on the desk in the office at the ministry center. Or, email Pastor Jennifer with the date, time, place and event. Help us invite members and guests to meet God.

Jesus Loves Me...

Many years ago, while watching a little TV on Sunday instead of going to church, I watched a Church in Atlanta honoring one of it's senior pastors who had been retired many years...

He was 92 at that time and I wondered why the Church even bothered to ask the old gentleman to preach at that

age. After a warm welcome and an introduction of this speaker and as the applause quieted down he rose from his high back chair and walked slowly, with great effort and a sliding gate, to the podium. Without a note or written paper of any kind, he placed both hands on the pulpit to steady himself and then quietly and slowly he began to speak....

"When I was asked to come here today and talk to you, your pastor asked me to tell you what was the greatest lesson ever learned in my 50 odd years of preaching. I thought about it for a few days and boiled it down to just one thing that made the most difference in my life and sustained me through all my trials. The one thing that I could always rely on when tears and heart break and pain and fear and sorrow paralyzed me...the only thing that

would comfort was this verse...

"Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong, we are weak but he is strong..... Yes, Jesus loves me.... The Bible tells me so."

When he finished, the church was quiet. You actually could hear his foot steps as he shuffled back to his chair. I don't believe I will ever forget it. A pastor once stated, "I always noticed that it was the adults who chose the children's hymn 'Jesus Loves Me' (for the children of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best."