



Disciples

March 2009

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA

On the Web: www.stmatthewsnoho.org

Photo gallery: picasaweb.google.com/stmatthewsnoho

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Toward Intentional Living

A
message
from
Dr. Guy
Erwin

Turn Around! It's Lent! In Lent, God calls on us through the Scriptures to remember who we are, and remember who God is to us; to live on purpose, to take the next step and each step for the next seven weeks with intentionality and mindfulness and purpose. This is not the same thing as being sad or sorry, though that might be part of your story as well—it's about moving forward consciously, deliberately, and fully awake to God's presence in your life.

Of course, repentance is part of that too—though again, that's not just about feeling sorry for what you've done, or haven't been able to do, or for all the weaknesses and struggles you have to be the person you think you ought to be. And though I think it's appropriate for us to consider our weakness and sin, and be realistic about our limits, repentance rightly

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Lenten Worship Schedule

Theme: Living in Spirit, Simplicity and Service

Wednesday, March 4

Noon to 1 p.m.: Lenten devotional, followed by soup and salad lunch at the church.

6:30 p.m. Soup supper; 7:30 p.m., Shared worship at All Saints Lutheran Church, 8040 Glenoaks Blvd, Sun Valley, CA 91352. Pastor Sue Devol and Dr. Guy Erwin will be attending these services. If you need a ride please contact the church office.

Wednesday, March 11

6:30 p.m., Soup supper; 7:30 p.m., worship here at St. Matthew's.

Wednesday, March 18

Noon to 1 p.m.: Lenten devotional, followed by soup and salad lunch at the church.

6:30 p.m., Soup supper; 7:30 p.m., Shared worship at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 920 W. Glenoaks Blvd, Glendale, CA 91201

Wednesday, March 25

6:30 p.m., Soup supper; 7:30 p.m., worship at St. Matthew's.

Wednesday, April 1

6:30 p.m., soup supper; 7:30 p.m., shared worship at St. Matthew's.



Lent: A Journey of Healing

A
message
from
Kenny
Callaghan

Welcome to Lent! It is one of my favorite seasons within the church year as I love the more reflective, somber music; the encouragement to be of service to others in giving of myself; the simplicity within our worship liturgy encouraging us to "return to God," and being reminded over and over again of God's redemptive love for me made manifest in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

This message is not new for me, as I've heard it since childhood, however the longer I live the reality of its truth and life-changing power becomes more and more evident. Realizing God's unchanging, all-encompassing love and grace, my life has been redeemed from utter pain and brokenness to one of beauty and joy.

My journey of healing continues each and every day as I seek to live as a man of

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Updates, Upcoming & Kudos

A thankful look
back and a helpful
look forward

Chimers needed

Anyone interested in playing chimes during Communion on Palm Sunday are welcome to join rehearsal after church on Sundays March 8 and 22. Please meet in the sanctuary for this fun ringing opportunity.

March food collection

We're collecting canned soups (preferably with flip top lids). These are then distributed by Lutheran Social Services in Van Nuys to San Fernando families and persons in need.

Pew watchers

We are looking for volunteers to serve as "pew watchers." If you would like to help welcome visitors to St. Matthew's by showing them the ropes, please e-mail or talk to Kenny or Pastor Sue.

'Feed the Homeless'

Fore a Lenten servant project, on Saturdays March 7 and 28, from 9 to 11:30 a.m., we will gather at the church to make sandwiches to hand out to those living on the street.

Getty Villa Outing

For visit to the Getty Villa in Malibu on Thursday, March 12, meet at the church at 10:30 a.m. to carpool. Lunch will be at 11:15 in the cafe (\$7-15).

There is no cost for the museum and parking, and we will be back by 3 p.m. The

March Birthdays



Photo by David Sinkler

St. Matthew's members celebrating birthdays this month are, from left, Chuck Dellamarie, Dave Allen, Dave Olsen and Steve Devol.

Getty Villa is modeled after an AD 1st century Roman country house, the "Villa dei Papiri," in Herculaneum, Italy, and is a museum dedicated to the study of the arts and cultures of ancient Greece, Rome, and Etruria.

Bingo

On May 16, a bingo fundraiser will be held at St. Matthew's.

Feminine Sacred Circle

The group presents "Emanuel Swedenborg: Lutheran Wanderings in the World of Spirit," Sunday, March 22, after church. FSC will host coffee hour and a slide presentation by Dr. Guy Erwin from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Fireside Room.

Synod Assembly

From June 5 to 7, the Southwest California Synod Assembly will meet at California Lutheran University.

Christopher West Gay Pride festival

The Christopher West Gay Pride West Hollywood Festival will be June 13 and 14. There will be free tickets for all who sign up to help at our booth.

Mexico House project

A fund-raiser will be held June 20 for Mexico House fundraiser at Joan Arndt's, this is our annual night for karaoke, fun and food. The house-building be Sept. 11-13 in Otay, Mexico.

Disciples



St. Matthew's Disciples is published monthly for the community of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Hollywood, Calif. Information or articles are due on the third Sunday of the month and can be left in the church office or e-mailed to Steve Devol:

stevedevol@gmail.com

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Emil Iliev

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Donald Rosenkjar

St. Matthew's worships weekly on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Worship services are provided in ASL for the deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. St. Matthew's is a member of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA. St. Matthew's is a part of the Reconciling-in-Christ program of Lutherans Concerned/North America. You can find St. Matthew's on the Internet at <http://stmatthewsnoho.org>

Sexuality Statement Released

On Feb. 19, the ELCA's proposed statement, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," was released by the task force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

This statement will be voted on at the Church-wide Assembly August 17-23 in Minneapolis.

As a result of its work since 2002, the task force has been keenly aware of the lack of consensus in this church concerning the approval of Lutherans in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as ordained ministers, deaconesses, diaconal ministers and associates in ministry.

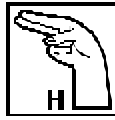
This lack of consensus also is present among the members of the task force itself. The majority of the task force members do not expect recovery of the former consensus. Neither do they expect a new consensus to emerge in the near future.

The recommendation presents a process that begins with decisions about whether this church wants to find ways to recognize publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and whether this church wants to move in the direction of approving for the rosters of this church individuals living in such relationships.

If so, then the process proposes how this could be

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Argentine Eye-Opener



Here's a thought about what I observed during my trip to South America a few weeks ago. My cousins, all living in Bariloche, Argentina, a mountain resort city of 120,000 at the foot of the Andes, are successful in their endeavors, and I'll point out just two.

First, Tago, a Dane, and his two sons operate several restaurants, and one of them on a typical day serves 2,000 customers.

Second, Rita, and her husband own a ranch comprising thousands of acres of beautiful land. They raise, among other things, polo horses which they train and sell internationally, as well as grass-fed cattle for their beef.

These people have the means to drive fancy cars, wear fine jewelry and designer clothes, but they don't. The women even don't wear makeup or perfume. They don't have Ipods or video games.

Each cousin I visited owns one 26-inch television, at least 10 years old. We spent our Christmas Eve with them. The gifts exchanged were simple, the stuff we'd find at 99-Cent-Only stores.

They do eat very well. They do travel. I've watched these people at work, and they are generous with their workers in ways I would not expect to see here in America. The bottom line is this: The words greed and materialism just don't exist in their vocabulary, unlike many of

us in America.

I explored further and saw that my cousins are quite similar to other people living in the town. I did not see one fancy car there, and that's rather odd because it is an upscale resort town and one must have the means to vacation there. Perhaps that's its culture, their own way of thinking, and they are different.

Am I to think I am different from them? I think not. I think it is good that we look at these people, explore their values, measure their happiness quotient, and decide which of us are more Christian.

We're now in Lent, which means we're now in a different frame of mind, as we eye the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. During this Lenten season, deaf and hearing friends, once again, will explore our own spirituality by getting together on Sundays and dig deep into the various issues of our lives, our souls. As always, this year, we'll do it a little bit differently, and here's the calendar:

March 1: Labyrinth at Forest Lawn Glendale after worship at St. Matthew's.

March 8: Viewing and discussion of "Babette's Feast" at Don Rosenkjar's home, with lunch, after the All-ASL worship service at St. Matthew's.

- March 15: Worship service at Judy and Clay Larson's home and discussion on spiritual mat-

Deaf mission developer notes

ters at 10:30 a.m.

- March 22: Join with deaf Episcopalians for Mass at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena at 9:30 a.m.
- March 29: Shepherd of the Hills in Porter Ranch at 11:30 a.m.

Contact me for further information at donkhai99@AOL.com

—Donald L. Rosenkjar

Congregational Calendar

Recurring Events

Adult Forum: every Sunday in the Fireside Room, 9:30 a.m.

Executive Committee, 6:30 p.m.

Church Council: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m.

Morning worship for deaf and others: Second and Fourth Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in Fraser Chapel, other Sundays in the sanctuary. Class every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Sharing Hands office.

Choir Rehearsal is on Wednesday nights at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Feminine Sacred Circle meets second and fourth Sundays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the church library.

Book Club meets the third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the church library. Our current book is "Father Melancholy's Daughter"; discussion will be on chapters 1—8.

Erwin

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understood has less to do with regret than it does with change — living differently, turning around and facing a new direction.

The Greek word our Bibles translate as repentance — *metanoia* — literally means “turning around” to face a new reality, to create a new way of being who we are.

So though Ash Wednesday’s ashes remind us of the shortness of life, and the fragility of earthly accomplishments and possessions, this season is really a season of life — of changed life; of new life.

The call to repentance, to turning around, reminds us that that next step you take might need to be in a different direction than the ones you took to get here. And in Lent we are called by God to get ready for what lies ahead of us on the path.

For the remainder of the season, we are being asked to discipline ourselves in the ways of our faith: by prayer,



Photo by Steve Devol

Stewardship campaign begins

Council Members Kay Gunderson and Morgan Rumpf discuss the upcoming stewardship campaign. Each member of the congregation will be receiving a letter this week.

by helping others, and by self-denial. Prayer is the most important of these, because it is by the ways we focus on who we are in the eyes of God — and live in consciousness of God’s

mercy and love — that we are empowered to love others and serve their needs, and able to set our priorities in such a way that we do not just indulge ourselves but create a better life for others. We don’t fast, or “give something up” simply to prove that we can do it or break a bad habit, but to free ourselves up for something better, to make something new possible — something good.

This significant season is special because it calls upon us to do something intentionally and deliberately that we really should be doing spontaneously and naturally — putting God and our neighbor above ourselves.

Lent gives us the chance to try to be — on purpose — the kind of people we wish we could be all the time.

And I think it holds out the hope to us that we might actually be capable of kinder, more generous, more intentional living, not just in this purple season, but all around the calendar and through our whole lives.

God does not just remind us of our dust and ashes and the shortness of life to frighten us into behaving, but gives us Jesus to show us God’s love and a new way to live; a new way to understand life as full and rich and whole, not short but never-ending. Your next step is to move toward that life!

Sexuality Statement

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accomplished. The recommendation seeks agreement on the principles before it addresses policies.

To read a summary of the statement go to our website, stmatthewsnoho.org and click on the “Members and Friends” image, then click on the “members area” link. When prompted, enter user name: *stmatts*; password:

2009user, then click on the link that allows you to read the entire document. You can also download the document from the elca.org website.

The entire proposed statement will be available in hard copy in the church office in the next couple of weeks. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please let the church office know.



Photo by Steve Devoil

Sending a message to California Lutheran High School

Members of the congregation wrote letters to the WELS-ELC high school which expelled two students for a "perceived" lesbian relationship. We pray they will reconsider their witness.

Callaghan

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faith, aware of God's presence to leave in grace, truth, love, service and freedom.

This is the message of Lent and ultimately the message of God. God's love is a simple message communicated in many different ways but at times can be a message that can be difficult to embrace.

As we individually and corporately grow spiritually, not only do our personal lives change but our vision and response to others changes as well. As we experience God in the depths of our soul, it is a natural response to desire to share our journey with others.

This week I have been aware that we at St. Matthew's have lots to share. At the Ash Wednesday service, our choir's ministry of music touched the hearts of choir members from other churches who do not have this ongoing ministry as we do. It was wonderful to see our choir members sing, laugh and interact with others within our shared Lutheran community and then together minister through song.

The past several Sundays our Pew Watchers have been busy during worship, reaching out to visitors, trying to welcome them and showing them around our church. People are volunteering to participate in our Lenten worship and service opportunities.

Donations continue to come in for Lutheran Social Services. Because of the congregation's commitment to grow and have me work full-time I was able to meet privately with a young man recently diagnosed with AIDS. He reached out to us because he and his family were at our AIDS Awareness Sunday and heard me preach and share my journey with HIV. During our visit I was able to remind him that God loves him no matter what ... AIDS, fear, doubt, etc. cannot ever change God's love for him. All this and much more happened just this week and is becoming more frequent because of our mission of sharing God's love and grace.

This Lent, grab ahold of the opportunity to draw

Holy Week Schedule

Sunday, April 5
10:30 a.m., Palm
Sunday worship
 followed by potluck brunch. Invite your friends to this beginning of Holy Week event!

Thursday, April 9
7:30 p.m., Maundy
Thursday worship at All Saints, Sun Valley

Friday, April 10
7:30 p.m., Good Friday
worship with the Stations of the Cross, at St. Matthew's, Glendale

Saturday, April 11
7:30 p.m., Great Vigil of Easter at St. Matthew's NoHo, followed by a festive champagne reception! Invite your friends!

Sunday, April 12
10:30 a.m., festival
worship for Easter at St. Matthew's NoHo.

closer to God. Use the devotional kits provided in the narthex for added prayer and meditation, attend our midweek Lenten services and the soup-salad fellowship time, find ways to be of service to others. Join us as we give lunches to the homeless as well as bring canned soup for our community food bank through Lutheran Social Services. Invite a friend to worship and bring someone along to one of our outreach events. In doing so, you share the message of God's love.