



The Monthly Heartbeat

The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter

Volume 22 DECEMBER 2015 Issue 12

Embrace

Enfold

Encourage

Equip

Exalt

Advent Reflections

By Pastor Scott

Advent is a time of anticipation and reflection. It is a time when we reflect upon the entrance of the Son of God into our world as a living, breathing human person embodying within himself the full divinity of the Creator. We also anticipate his return in glorious splendor to our world, where once again his full humanity and divinity will be revealed in undeniable clarity. The Scriptures tell us that the whole world will see the coming of the Lord when he returns in the clouds with the angels and the saints of glory (Rev. 1:7). Oh what a glorious picture.

So how should the people of God respond to these two great events in world history – one from the past and one in the future? I have been thinking a lot about the Lordship of Christ these days and I believe that understanding the Lordship of Jesus makes all the difference in how we respond this advent season. For many years, at least 70 or 80, probably longer, the message of the gospel has been neutered of its power. Many churches and Christians, when asked to proclaim the gospel, declare something like, “Jesus died for your sin, believe that and you will go to heaven.” I do not deny that this is a part of the gospel, it just isn’t the full message of conversion and this is important to understand. True conversion is about a change of ruling authority in the Christian life, not just about some words to which one assents.

Let me illustrate this. The Gospel of Mark begins with a troubling statement for many, “The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mk 1:15). It is troubling because the good news

Jesus proclaims, when viewed strictly from the idea that Jesus died for my sins, hasn’t happened. Jesus hasn’t died; sin hasn’t been paid - yet. The grave is still victorious. But if the gospel is more than just believe this declaration about your sin and it actually involves submitting to the Lordship of Jesus, then this passage and others like it make more sense.

The idea of the Kingdom coming (both at the first advent and in the future) involves more than simply the payment of sin. The Kingdom is the realm where the will of God is done and the subjects of the Kingdom readily and joyfully rejoice and carry out God’s rule. The Kingdom is a place where holiness and righteousness pervade every thought, action, word and desire. The Kingdom is a place where Jesus has authority to dictate how life is lived and how people behave. It is no wonder that Jesus calls people to repent. For who among us has lived out the Lordship of Jesus perfectly? Who among us has submitted to the biblical injunctions to love sacrificially, to give till it hurts, to turn the other cheek and bless those who curse us? But all of this is the Kingdom. All of this is what we are called to repent of and to believe, and it includes the forgiveness of sin, but isn’t limited to it. Jesus is inviting people into a dynamic relationship where he is both Savior and Lord simultaneously.

And it is this idea of the Kingdom that Paul is getting at in Romans 10:9 when he writes, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” The

...continued on Page 2

Items of Interest from November's Council Meeting

By Brian Koning

Elder's report – Brian reported that the elders have decided that the previously held 6pm first Wed of the month prayer meeting will be moved to the Sunday School hour after church of the third Sunday of each month. This will take effect beginning in January.

Deacon's report – Christine shared the financial report, and reported on the ministries that we'll vote to support during the upcoming congregational meeting (three of the following: Cascade Connection, Interfaith, Seafarers, Kidstown, New Way Ministries, and Northwest Hispanic Ministries. We'll continue supporting Envision, Street Corners, and Lighthouse Mission).

Building & Grounds Maintenance Committee Report - Lou reported on the state of the buildings & grounds

Old Business:

Church Vitality Renewal: Status Report – Scott reported that the steering Committee would be getting together in the coming weeks to prepare for the Jan 15-16 meeting. All of the congregation is invited and encouraged to come! Please mark your calendars. The Steering Committee is made up of: Herm Laninga, Scott Emory and Faye Hop

Talking About God worship: This was discussed, and though this past month's TAG was very enjoyable, we realize that it needs to be better advertised. Next TAG December 6th - Lou to facilitate on "What led to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism?"

Proposed Change to Church Articles of Incorporation: the proposed changes were discussed.

Church By-Laws/Policy: David reported on our new church liability insurance policy. He also reported that our background check form will be updated at the request of the new insurer. The signed form will be kept by the church secretary for a two year cycle.

Church Web presence: Mike is continuing to research this.

Mitch Senti requests for help at Jesus Gathering in January 2016 was discussed. David will follow up with Christine, who will make a sign-up poster to help out. This will be brought up at the upcoming congregational meeting. The need for overseers will start in January.

2016 Church Budget: Dan reported the budget total was \$201k, and the AED is out at this time.

Scott reports that Grace Church Bellingham would be interested in having a joint event with their Christmas Eve service.

New Business:

World Renew Mission project Eastern Washington summer 2016. Dave has been approached by two members (Hops and Vander Woudes), suggesting that we work with World Renew. These two couples would be willing to lead this trip. We're excited to see the groundwork for this trip to be laid, and look forward to seeing what God holds for this mission.

Mike reported that he has a quote from Interconnect that will save us net money on an IP based phone

Next Month...

Prayer Meeting: Wednesday 12/2 at 6:00 PM

Deacons and Elders Meeting Wednesday 12/2 at 7:00 PM

Communion Sunday – 12/6 Elders: David, Mike, and Lou

TAG worship - Sunday 12/6 at 6:00 PM

Council Meeting - Wednesday 12/9 at 7:00

Friendship's Christmas Program: Monday 12/14 at 6PM

Christmas Eve Service – 12/24 at 7:00 PM

Advent Reflections...cont. from Pg. 1

apostle John records Jesus saying the same thing in different words, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." Both John and Paul are informing the reader that Christ must be obeyed as part of the salvation message. He is King eternal. Sure, He came as a child, lowly and lying in a manger, but He is King of Heaven. Sure, He is gentle and humble of heart and we can find rest for our weary souls in his grace, but He is Lord of Lord and King of Kings. Sure He forgives us over and over for our sins, but He calls us to follow him, to be his disciples, to carry out His plans in His world.

Advent reminds us not only of the saving work of God on our behalf, but also of his glorious reign. So this advent season, as each of us anticipates the glorious return of our Lord, maybe we ought to reflect more on the Lordship of Christ and what it means to live life not only with an eye to having our sins forgiven, but also, desirous of submitting more and more of our life to his reign. For what greater gift can we bring to the King of Kings than a heart and life submitted in every way to his rule? Such is the only fitting response to the great events of history.

Preaching Series:

- 12/6 Lk 1:67-80 Zechariah's Song of Praise
12/13 Lk 1:26-56 Mary's Magnificat
12/20 Jn 14:1-6 Jesus Is Coming Back
12/27 Lk 2:1-20 Shepherds and Angels

Greeters Schedule

Outside Doors

- 12/6 Lisa Oppenhuizen and Helen Bowman
12/13 Lanny and Christine Speyer
12/20 Karen Smith and Chris Pike
12/24 Christmas Eve Service—Mike & Jenn Boer
12/27 Ruth Stadt and Joe Pruitt

Nursery Schedule

- 12/6 Ruth Stadt and Caroline Boenig
12/13 Rosa McAlister, Esther VandenBos
12/20 Connie Knutson, Tena Vanderpol
12/24 Christmas Eve—Arlene Veenstra & Terry VW
12/27 Tricia Bravener and Pat Bosman

Coffee/Snack Schedule

- 12/6 Lisa Oppenhuizen, Deloris Perry
12/13 Mona Reardon, Darlys Recker
12/20 Ida Richards, Jen Roberts
12/27 Rockelle Ruiters, Jan Scholten

Hospitality requests that you bring your snacks the week prior to your scheduled Sunday.

Prayer Room

- 12/6 Herm Laninga
12/13 Ida Richards
12/20 Connie Knutson
12/27 Jay Kaemingk

Offering Schedule

- 12/6 General Fund
12/13 General Fund
12/20 Outreach Fund
12/27 General Fund

Ushering Schedule

- 12/6 Len Vander Woude, Ken Wick
12/13 Bud Brouwer, Lou Kooistra
12/20 Dale and Deloris Perry
12/27 Helen Bowman, Don Knutson

Children & Worship Schedule

- 12/6 Dan Obbink and Morgan Roberts
12/13 Bekah Roberts and Ev Kooistra
12/20 Rosa McAlister and Megan Speyer
12/27 Diane Button and Ali Laninga

Sunday School Schedule

- 12/6 Christmas Program During Service
12/13 Terry VW, Melissa Koning, Darlys Recker
12/20 Terry VW, Melissa Koning, Darlys Recker
12/27 Terry VW, Melissa Koning, Darlys Recker

Congregational Birthdays For December

- 04 Harlean Stegink
06 Melissa Koning
09 Mairi Bravener
09 Maggie Skovron
13 Carol Howard
14 Yvonne Braun
16 Darryl Groothuis
23 Ali Laninga
24 Don Recker
27 Brenna Koning
28 Morgan Roberts
29 Doug Scholten
30 Helen Bowman



December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> 10am Women's Grp 10am Men's Coffee Grp 6pm Prayer Time 7pm Elders and Deacons Meet	<i>3</i> 6:30am Men's Grp 7pm Praise Team Practice 7pm Men's Grp	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i> 9-noon Children's Christmas Program Practice
<i>6</i> 9:30 Service and Christmas Program 6pm TALK meets in foyer	<i>7</i> 6:30 GEMS Mtg 7:00pm Bldg. and Maint. Team Mtg.	<i>8</i> 7pm Ladies' Study Group	<i>9</i> 10am Women's Grp 10am Men's Coffee Grp 7pm Council Mts	<i>10</i> 6:30am Men's Grp 7pm Praise Team Practice 7pm Men's Grp	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>13</i> 9:30 Service 11 Sunday Sch. 4:30 Pastor Scott's Grp 7pm Laninga Grp	<i>14</i> 7pm Friendship Christmas Program  Tell Me The Story Of Jesus	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> 10am Women's Grp 10am Men's Coffee Grp	<i>17</i> 6:30am Men's Grp 7pm Praise Team Practice 7pm Men's Grp	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>20</i> 9:30 Service 11 Sunday Sch.	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service  CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	<i>25</i> Merry Christmas 	<i>26</i>
<i>27</i> 9:30 Service 11 Sunday Sch. 4:30 Pastor Scott's Grp 7pm Laninga Grp	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>		

Interfaith Coalition Coat Drive A Warm Success

As the cool weather finds us reaching for a jacket, we're reminded that some of our neighbors are in need of this basic item we take for granted. This fall, we provided winter coats as well as hats and scarves to our neighbors. Thank you for donating winter wear and bringing some much needed warmth to others this fall. We appreciate your commitment to this program and are humbled to experience the gratitude in words or expressions of those who benefit from your efforts.

It is so heart-warming to witness coats no longer needed by members of your congregation benefiting people in need, allowing them to spend their limited income on other basic necessities.

In God's love, Laura Harker, Executive Director, Interfaith Coalition

Mission Trip to Okanogan Valley with World Renew

Would you like to help those harmed by the recent fires in Eastern Washington but can't volunteer three to four weeks with World Renew? Here is your chance to participate in a church sponsored mission next June. The Hops and Vander Woudes are organizing a mission trip through World Renew for the weeks of June 12th and June 19th. Your family can come for the full two weeks or just part of the time.

Our group may be doing clean-up, assistance projects (fencing, small building projects), working on homes, mitigation (reseeding, tree planting).

In January we will have a sign up poster where you can list when you are volunteering and what area you would like to assist with.

We can camp as a group where you will be responsible for your own food and shelter, etc. Or we can be hosted by a church, at a cost to each family.

Families with children are welcome to participate, keeping in mind our group would have to organize its own child care as children under the age of twelve must be supervised.

Deacon's Digest

By Ali Laninga

Thank you to everyone for your generous giving on Thanksgiving. We collected \$1,444.50 for World Renew Disaster Relief Services. We were also able to deliver an overflowing basket of non-perishable food to the Bellingham Food Bank. Let's continue to bring food items as Christmas approaches and the need continues to be great in our community. The Food Bank basket is located in the foyer.

Here in a glance is what the Deacon's have been involved with this past year:

December 2014 – Gifts were collected for 5 men at the Lighthouse Mission New Life Program through the Giving Tree.

January – Ethiopian Well Fund Project; Sock Drive for Mitch Senti's Street Ministry and Love Inc. Bedding Donation.

February – Valentine's Project with cards and goodies to all the single women in our church.

April – Spring Fling Hymn Sing.

May – Church Breakfast before the Church annual grounds work party, and Hygiene items collected for Project Homeless Connect.

September – Elder/Deacon Potluck.

October/November – Fall Hymn Sing: Budget preparations and Interfaith Coat Drive.

During the year, the Deacons also facilitated Pastor Appreciation Month, First Aid & CPR Workshop, helped with dental needs, gas, rent assistance, wheelchair assistance, procured donations to Interfaith and Love Inc. for their auctions, established Alice Brakke as Parish Nurse, collected donations for the Food Bank and promoted the TRIP program.

Most memorable was the paying off the CRC Loan thanks to the hard work of our volunteer Janitors!!!

A big thank you to all of you for being so generous and willing to donate your time, talents and finances to further God's Kingdom here at the Corner of Sunset and James.



THESE CARDS EARNS 4% REBATES

Aeropostale	x \$25 =	_____
Bed Bath and Beyond	x \$25 =	_____
Bob's Burger & Brew	x \$20 =	_____
Buckle	x \$25 =	_____
Buffalo Wild Wings	x \$25 =	_____
Burlington	x \$25 =	_____
Cruisin' Coffee	x \$25 =	_____
Edaleen Dairy Stores	x \$25 =	_____
Food CoOp (LIMIT 3)	x \$100 =	_____
Fred Meyer	x \$50 =	_____
Fred Meyer	x \$100 =	_____
Heroes Resource	x \$25 =	_____
Jack-in-the-Box	x \$10 =	_____
JC Penney	x \$25 =	_____
Jo-Ann Fabric	x \$25 =	_____
Kohl's _____ \$25 or	x \$100 =	_____
Lynden Dollars	x \$10 =	_____
Lynden Dollars	x \$100 =	_____
Michael's	x \$25 =	_____
Olive Gard Red Lobs	x \$25 =	_____
Papa Murphy's	x \$10 =	_____
Red Robin	x \$25 =	_____
Regal Cinema	x \$25 =	_____
REI	x \$25 =	_____
Rite-Aid	x \$25 =	_____
Safeway	x \$25 =	_____
Safeway	x \$100 =	_____
Shutterfly	x \$25 =	_____
Sports Authority	x \$25 =	_____
Starbucks	x \$10 =	_____
Starbucks	x \$25 =	_____
Subway	x \$25 =	_____
T. J. Maxx/Marshalls	x \$25 =	_____

THESE CARDS EARNS 10% REBATES

American Eagle	x \$25 =	_____
Applebees	x \$25 =	_____
Bath & Body Works	x \$10 =	_____
Cabela's _____ \$25 or	x \$100 =	_____
Children's Place	x \$25 =	_____
Chipotle Mexican Grill	x \$10 =	_____
Food Pavilion/Markets	x \$50 =	_____
Food Pavilion/Markets	x \$100 =	_____
Gap/Old Navy	x \$25 =	_____
Haggen	x \$ 50 =	on hold
Haggen	x \$100 =	on hold
Hinton:Service & Parts	x \$100 =	_____
<i>(Hintons will also donate \$10 to LC's Tuition Assistance Fund!)</i>		
Jake's Western Grill	x \$25 =	_____
Launching Success	x \$25 =	_____
Little Caesar's (Local)	x \$25 =	_____
<i>(Caesar's will also donate \$2.50 to LC's Tuition Assistance Fund!)</i>		
McDonalds	x \$ 10 =	_____
Muddy Waters	x \$10 =	_____
Muddy Waters	x \$25 =	_____
Old Navy/Gap	x \$25 =	_____
Rusty Wagon (Hannegan Rd)	x \$25 =	_____
Steakhouse 9 & Bistro	x \$25 =	_____
New York Pizza	x \$25 =	_____
Westside Pizza	x \$25 =	_____
Woods Coffee	x \$20 =	_____

FOR FIRST TIME CUSTOMERS:

I HAVE A TUITION ACCOUNT # _____
 I HAVE A TUITION ACCOUNT # _____ BUT
 WANT TO KEEP REBATES ON RESERVE
 I DO NOT HAVE A TUITION ACCOUNT SO
 PLEASE SEND YEAR-END STATEMENTS TO:

ADDRESS: _____

 EMAIL: _____
 PHONE: _____

CUSTOM MERCHANT CHECKS*

Vendor Name: _____ Amt Request: \$ _____
 _____ \$ _____
 _____ \$ _____

* Custom Check order request must be greater than \$100; please verify if any restrictions exist

TOTAL OF 4% ORDER: \$

REBATE (NAME HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD): _____

RECEIPT NUMBER:

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: LCS TRIP

TOTAL OF 10% CARDS: \$

My name:	
My phone:	
PAYMENT TYPE:	GRAND TOTAL

Let me do your holiday baking!

Holiday Sweets

Adoption Fundraiser

1 dozen Cookies for \$5 or 12 dozen (1 of each type)/\$50

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> peanut butter | <input type="checkbox"/> blondies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chocolate chip | <input type="checkbox"/> peanut butter bars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> M&M cookies | <input type="checkbox"/> lemon bars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> snickerdoodles | <input type="checkbox"/> s'mores bars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gingersnaps | <input type="checkbox"/> black and white |
| <input type="checkbox"/> brownies | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peanut butter kisses | <input type="checkbox"/> fudge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> kid's plate (1 of each) | |

Candy Bark Samplers

4-1/2 lb. bags for \$20, 6 for \$28, or all 8 flavors for \$35

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> peppermint | <input type="checkbox"/> spearmint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chocolate peppermint | <input type="checkbox"/> cookies and cream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crunchy tiger butter (peanut butter and chocolate) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> white chocolate with cranberries and almonds | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dark chocolate with cherries and almonds | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dark chocolate with toffee and pretzels | |

All items attractively packaged, suitable for gifting or placing on your dessert table!

**Order by December 14th for pickup at
Hope in Christ Church on December 19th.**

Custom orders with alternate delivery dates possible!

Call me to discuss: 398-0101 or 815-4973.

Name _____

Email/Phone _____

Total \$ _____

Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for November 2015 by Joe Strong
(NWHM, 701 W. Blackburn Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA 98273)

The text came around 9:00 p.m. on a Wednesday evening. I had been thinking of going to bed. "Rocio has an appendicitis and needs an operation immediately. Please pray!" Well, I knew that the mother, Fausta, was living with her 6 children on a small amount of money and she spoke little English. Her husband had been picked up by the immigration authorities a year earlier and was sitting in a Federal prison in Arizona. I was worried that mom might run into problems with not speaking English, and needed another person to be there. I texted back and did not receive a reply. I called the house and one of Fausta's children told me that mom had gone alone with Rocio. So, I jumped into my car and drove 35 minutes to the hospital in Bellingham. When I arrived Rocio was having her operation and Marv Apol was there with Fausta. I thought to myself, 'I am so glad to have Marv in our Amor Viviente Church. He does not speak Spanish but he is such an excellent servant of Jesus. He drives the children of our church to Gems and Cadets each week, goes on day trips with the kids on some weekends and he has led Sunday School for years without a break. Now Marv is at the hospital for moments like this.' Not only is Fausta thankful for Marv but our entire Amor Viviente Church loves this man. Pray that God will continue to give Marv the strength he needs.

Sometimes I get in wrestling matches with God. I just don't understand a lot of things and it causes me pain, confusion and disappointment. Many people come and go in my life, people accept Jesus then abandon him. Others walk in the path of light for a while then choose darkness again. Our little church in Mt. Vernon seems to go forward then backward. Men get back with their wives only to start fighting all over again. Some people never seem to get on top of their addictions. I pray and pray. I ask Jesus to move mountains, change hearts and be present in dark places. I believe in Jesus. I believe in prayer. I have seen the other side as well. I have stood on the mountain tops and can testify to miracles. Pray for me. I really don't need your money as much as I need your prayers.

This ministry is doing well over all. Our Amor Viviente Church is doing very well. The jail ministry is always touching new lives. Our Bridges of Hope house has had to let one man go but is receiving a new one this week. Prayer is power.

Joe Strong, Director