

APOSTLES EPISTLE

The Monthly Newsletter January 2009
of Apostles Lutheran Church, ELCA

*The Mission of Apostles Lutheran Church
is to be and make Disciples for Christ.*

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Blessings in the New Year

from Apostles Staff, Council & Deacons

Pastor V

Michele Van Epps

Sue Ann Collinge

Kit O'Rourke

Ron Beisecker

Corky Lund

Liz Jimenez

Sandra Sornson

James Carmichael

Jose Rivera

Greg Prince

Joel Rentz

Bert Seibert

Coleman Hill

Bill Whitehead

Ken Brown

Gary Cottingham

Emilia Eich

Mary Greenwood

Matt Hecmanczuk

Jean Holler

Julio Jimenez

Becky Loraamm

Howard McNair

Allen Mitchell

Kristen Smith

Richard Van Epps

Lillian Davis

January



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In Matthew 14:22-36, we hear the story of Jesus walking toward the disciples in the boat across the waters of the storm-tossed sea. That text was read at the Eucharist at the end of the first day of the recent *Together in Mission* gathering sponsored by our Florida-Bahamas Synod. For two days, leaders across the synod came together to explore ways our congregations can work together cooperatively within our conferences to fulfill the mission Christ has given to the church, the mission to bear God's love to the world.

There is plenty of humor in this story. First, there is the humor of the unwarranted fear of the disciples – they are afraid the figure coming toward them across the stormy waters is a ghost. Next, after they realize it is Jesus, there is the humor of Peter's bold and brash request – *Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water*. Then comes the humor of Peter's eager egress from the boat. Note that he does well walking on the water as long as he keeps his eyes on Jesus, but when he gets distracted by the wind and waves and begins to think about where he is, he begins to sink like the *Rock* that he is.

As the text was being read, it struck me that Peter's experience is a parable for the church in these difficult times. Like Peter, we want to be faithful to our Lord, even amid the storm-tossed seas of life. When the storms lash out against us, we faithfully wait as Jesus comes to us over the tempests.

We may not be as bold and brash as Peter asking our Lord to command us to step out of the boat. Nevertheless, as he comes to us Jesus commands us just the same, both as individuals and as a church. Jesus commands us to step out of the boat and join him in the midst of the howling winds and crashing waves that swirl and rage about us.

As difficult as the times are and the days ahead may become, we are called to be faithful. Like Peter, we are commanded to step out of the boat. And like Peter, as long as we keep our focus on Jesus – on his command, on the gifts of grace he gives us and on the power of his love that sustains us – we too can walk across the stormy waters. But if we turn our eyes away from Jesus and focus on the tempest swirling about us, we will get so wrought up in *where* we are and the *perils* we face that we will begin to sink like a rock.

Jesus commands us to step out of the boat. In many ways, I see evidence of our willingness to obey our Lord. The outpouring of love to help several families this Christmas shows that we are keeping our eyes on Jesus. Because of our faith and generosity, we raised over \$1500 at the spaghetti dinner on December 14 to help one of our families with extreme medical expenses. *Thrivent Financial for Lutherans* added \$1200 in matching funds. We also helped several families with Christmas providing food and gifts. In the case of one family, the situation is so dire the children would have received nothing had it not been for the generosity of the members of the congregation. Beyond that, our support of *The Jesse Tree*, which provides gifts for indigent children, was overwhelming this year. These acts of generosity are commendable expressions of Christ-like love.

While I appreciate and applaud our faithfulness to Christ in these acts of generosity for others in this time of scarcity, I must remind you that we also need to be as generous in our support of the ministries of Apostles. Stewardship and budget are urgent concerns for us as we enter the new year. If we do not grow our support for Apostles, we will deplete our endowment fund in two years forcing us to gut many of our ministries. Please understand, that statement is not an exaggeration; it is a fact.

At the *Together in Mission* event, one of the presenters pointed out that the average giving of members of Lutheran churches is 1.7% of personal income. Sadly, that is descriptive of the giving at Apostles. Our paucity in giving does not evidence faithfulness to Christ. The Bible calls for us to give a tithe, which is 10% of our personal income.

While it is unlikely that we can grow congregational giving by 8% in the near future, there is plenty of room for growth in giving. When we look at the numbers, we begin to see the potential we have to support strong and vibrant ministries at Apostles. Think about it, if each member of the congregation were to grow in giving by 1% of personal income, we would gain c. \$200,000 more per year for the work of Christ in this place.

I know the economic tempest raging in America has affected us all. Some of us have felt the catastrophic impact of the loss of good-paying jobs. Others are facing stagnant wages and/or decreased hours at work. And all of us feel the angst of uncertainty as we wait to see how the economy will play out in 2009. Will things get better, or will it get worse before the economy begins to improve? These are the storm tossed waves that lash out against us today.

In the midst of these stormy waters, Christ commands us to step out of the boat. Will we be obedient and step out in faith, or will we try to play it safe and stay in the boat?

The Bible is always filled with tension between obedience and faithful trust in the promise of God to lead us on ever new and bold journeys—even when the way is uncertain and the destination unknown—and the desire of the human heart to play it safe. Whether we sink or stay above the waters depends not on our staying in the boat; it depends on our determination to keep our eyes fixed on Christ and our faith grounded on him.

Peace and Joy in Christ,

Pastor V

Youth, Young Adult & Drama Ministries
 Michele Van Epps, Coordinator

MIDDLE SCHOOL/SENIOR HIGH

SENIOR HIGH TIME! RETURNS!

Wednesday January 7th @ 6:30 PM

We will begin the New Year by examining
 "Affluenza".

If you are in the 9th-12th grade, this time is for **YOU!** We meet every Wednesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in the Café. This is your time to come and spend time with other senior high youth. This has been a very busy group. We have focused on some special scriptures; looked into conservation practices; made recycle bins for the Café and Theisz Hall and are responsible for recycling the items collected; made get well cards for congregation members and teamed up with FIGS to create care packages for the homeless. All the while we have had lots of fun! So, join us on Wednesdays!!

GOD'S SPA FOR GIRLS

Luther Springs, Hawthorne
 Middle School
 February 6-8, 2009

Cost: \$135 Youth participant/\$95 Adult chaperone

This weekend retreat for middle school aged girls is a time for friends, fun, and facials! Come together and enjoy time away from school, cell phones, homework, and boys. Meet new friends and treat yourself like the princess you know you are. Weekend activities will include: lots of pampering, devotions, and several spa-type activities such as facials, hand/foot scrubs, hair styling and skin care. Recreational time will be spent playing games, enjoying the sun, hiking, canoeing or paddle boating. Devotional time will be spent learning and deepening your faith. Meals will offer a variety of healthy choices. We will conclude the weekend with Sunday morning worship and a light brunch.



Watch for more information and mark your calendars NOW for these upcoming events:

RIVER RAT RAMBLE Day Trip
 Luther Springs, Hawthorne
 March 7, 2009

Volleyball Marathon
 April 3-4, 2009

Education

ADULT BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Adult Bible Study will resume on Thursday, January 8th at 10:00 AM in North Theisz. Now is the perfect time to be a part of this group as they begin a New Year and a new study.
 Sue Ann Collinge is the facilitator.

AKALOO

The **Sundays A-live** (Sunday School) classes for age 3 through 6th grade will continue beginning January 4th. Classes are offered from 9:15-9:45 - they begin and end promptly. Apostles is blessed with dedicated teachers, an excellent curriculum and great kids! We encourage all kids to Akaloo with us and also to explore the online Akaloo.org site that is open to all. If you would like to have access to this website see Sue Ann or Kit and they will be sure that you are able to log on for the wonderful educational tools that are offered.

Confirmation Update

The second semester of **Sunday Confirmation class** begins on **January 4th**. Classes are offered from 8:15-9:30 AM or 9:45-10:30 AM in North Theisz. The **Wednesday evening class** will resume on **Jan. 7th at 6:30 PM** in Theisz Hall.

In December, progress reports from the first semester were put in all parent and mentor mailboxes. Sue Ann will be finishing the grading of the first semester tests as soon as possible.

Confirmands...get those sermon notes in now as there have never been nor will there ever be 8 Sundays in April! Also, turn in your service point forms as soon as possible. Remember - you need 20 service hours with at least 2 hours from each of the five categories.



Wednesday Dinners

Wednesday Night Dinners resume on January 7th at 5:30 PM in Theisz Hall. The first week we will be ordering Pizza from Papa John's Pizza. Look for the sign-up sheet outside the Narthex.

Children, Family & Education Ministries

Kit O'Rourke, Coordinator



The Christmas party for the children was tons of fun. We made cards for Veterans, stuffed stockings for those in need, decorated cupcakes for the Spaghetti Benefit fund raiser, went on a Nativity scavenger hunt, and exchanged gifts. It was a wonderful way for all involved to celebrate

Christmas. It was all made possible by a group of wonderful parents who helped set up activities and cleaned up after us. Thanks so much to everyone that helped make the day possible.



Due to the increasingly difficult economic times, more families are experiencing financial struggles. As a church, we currently contribute to Meals on Wheels, ECHO, and Hunger Free Mission as well as have a food pantry, Living Christ's Love, for members of Apostles' family that are experiencing hardships. In order to help keep the cupboards for Living Christ's Love stocked, we are asking the children to bring a container of designated food each week. January 4th & 11th will be Peanut Butter weeks, but any contributions will be accepted. We will collect the contributions at the beginning of Children's Church. This will be a great way for our children to learn about living out the Spirit of Christmas all year long.



On January 24th the children, 5th grade and younger will be going to the movie. The movie and time will be decided once we see the movie schedule closer to the date. There is a sign-up sheet outside the Narthex or you can email Kit at (n2thefaiht@yahoo.com) and let her know you are coming. Parents are always welcome to come along.

F. I. G. S.

Back by popular demand; FIGS (Faithfully In God's Service) will start up again on Wednesday, January 7th at 6:30 PM. We will begin the year by cleaning toys for the preschool. We can always use more hands and new ideas. This is an intergenerational group; you can't be too young or too old to participate. Come and have fun while doing service projects for Apostles and the community.

Lost: One forlorn little plastic donkey.

During our Nativity Scavenger Hunt at the Children's Christmas Party, the donkey went missing. If anyone finds it please turn it in at the church office. There is a reward for his return:
Kit's undying gratitude!

Worship Planning

There is a Worship Planning meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 6th at 7:00 PM. We will meet in the Harmony Room.



The next church Council Meeting will be Tuesday, January 13th at 7:00 PM in the Harmony Room.

These poinsettias were inadvertently left out of the bulletin on Christmas Eve.

In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. P on their anniversary and In Loving Memory of Grandma & Grandpa Myers and Grandpa Schumacher by Brenda Doggett.

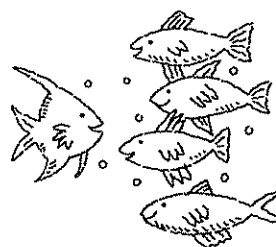
We have started an advertising section in the Epistle (see page 15). If you would like to advertise your business in the Epistle contact Liz in the church office at 689-2571. The donation for the ad is \$5.00/month.



The Berg Family, Denice, Monty, Emilia, H.T., Matthew, Helena and Katrina on the loss of Denice's mom, Beatrice Beck.

We keep the entire family in our thoughts and prayers through this sad and difficult time.

Are you interested in becoming a member of Apostles' family? We will be scheduling a New Member/Inquirer's Class to start soon. Watch the "Inviting All" for more information on dates and times. Call Liz or Sue Ann in the office if you have any questions.



NEW Member Class



Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

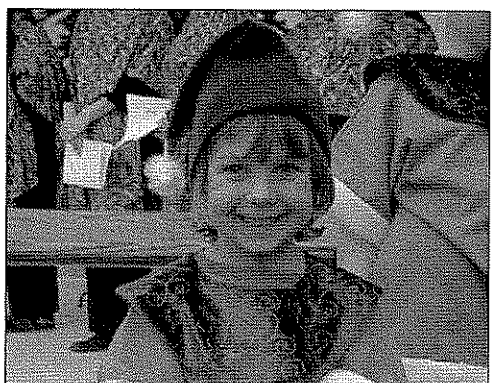
Matthew 5:16

The pageantry, color, music, and food were all wonderful- but what made "Boar's Head" become a ministry of the heart this year was the commitment to help tell the real Christmas story in such a creative and meaningful way. That commitment came from our entire Apostles family. There were over 180 individuals that took part (plus 2 birds; Thank-you Lowry Park Zoo), from age 4 & up and 23 Apostles' families that were totally involved. 354 people attended the Boar's Head Feast Friday-Sunday not including those that attended the Thursday evening benefit. Over 70 % of those attending were from outside Apostles.

That is truly allowing our "Light to shine"!

Soli Deo Gloria

To God alone be the glory!



JANUA

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed
<p>28 (3) WORSHIP SERVICES 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)</p>	<p>29 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM O.A. 7:00pm - (GR) 7:00 PM Pack 110 Cub Scouts (TH)</p>	<p>30 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM M.O.W.</p>	<p>31 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR)</p>
<p>4 (3) WORSHIP SERVICES 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 Confirmation Class - (NT) 8:30am-9:30am or 9:45am-10:45am 9:15 AM Sunday's A-Live - (Sunday School) 1:00 PM Princeton Review (SR)1-5PM 7:00 PM Women's Night Out 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)</p>	<p>5 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR)7:00 PM O.A. 7:00pm - (GR) 7:00 PM Pack 110 Cub Scouts (TH)</p>	<p>6 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM M.O.W. 7:30 PM BSA Troop 110 (TH) 7:30 PM Grief Support (SR)</p>	<p>7 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM Am. Sewi 9:30 AM Hallelujah 6:00 PM Brass E 6:30 PM Confir 6:30 PM F.I.G.S 6:30 PM Senior I 7:00 PM Good N 8:00 PM Ichthus</p>
<p>11 (3) WORSHIP SERVICES 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 Confirmation Class - (NT) 8:30am-9:30am or 9:45am-10:45am 9:15 AM Sunday's A-Live - (Sunday School) 1:00 PM Princeton Review (SR)1-5PM 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)</p>	<p>12 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM O.A. 7:00pm - (GR) 7:00 PM Pack 110 Cub Scouts (TH)</p>	<p>13 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM M.O.W. 7:00 PM Council Meeting (HR) 7:30 PM BSA Troop 110 (TH) 7:30 PM Grief Support (SR)</p>	<p>14 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:30 AM Hallelujah 5:30 PM Dinner (C 6:00 PM Brass E 6:30 PM Confir 6:30 PM F.I.G.S 6:30 PM Senior I 7:00 PM Good N 8:00 PM Ichthus</p>
<p>18 (3) WORSHIP SERVICES 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 Confirmation Class - (NT) 8:30am-9:30am or 9:45am-10:45am 9:15 AM Sunday's A-Live - (Sunday School) 1:00 PM Princeton Review (SR)1-5PM 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)</p>	<p>19 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM O.A. 7:00pm - (GR) 7:00 PM Pack 110 Cub Scouts (TH)</p>	<p>20 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM M.O.W. 5:45 PM J.A.K.E. 5:45-7:15pm (SR) 7:30 PM BSA Troop 110 (TH) 7:30 PM Grief Support (SR)</p>	<p>21 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:30 AM Hallelujah 5:30 PM Dinner (C 6:00 PM Brass E 6:30 PM Confir 6:30 PM F.I.G.S 6:30 PM Senior I 7:00 PM Good N 8:00 PM Ichthus</p>
<p>25 (3) WORSHIP SERVICES 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 Confirmation Class - (NT) 8:30am-9:30am or 9:45am-10:45am Presentation of Proposed Budget - following all services 9:15 AM Sunday's A-Live - (Sunday School) 1:00 PM Princeton Review (SR)1-5PM 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)</p>	<p>26 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM O.A. 7:00pm - (GR) 7:00 PM Pack 110 Cub Scouts (TH)</p>	<p>27 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM M.O.W. 10:00 AM Esther Circle - fel- lowship & Bible Study (GR) 7:30 PM BSA Troop 110 (TH) 7:30 PM Grief Support (SR)</p>	<p>28 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:30 AM Hallelujah 5:30 PM Dinner (C 6:00 PM Brass E 6:30 PM Confir 6:30 PM F.I.G.S 6:30 PM Senior I 7:00 PM Good N 8:00 PM Ichthus</p>

2009

Monday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day - Office Closed 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR)	2 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:30 PM First Friday Circle - (TH, NT) 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)	3 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 8:00 AM A-Men Breakfast & Bible Study - (NT) 7:00 PM Pinochle
	8 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 10:00 AM Bible Study - (NT) 11:30 AM Lunch w/ Pastor - (TH) 1:30 PM Rebecca's Circle Quilting (TH/NT) 1:30-4:30 PM 6:00 PM Juniors - GS Troop 888/ Brownies - GS Troop 36(TH/NT) 6:30 PM Stephen Minister (SR) 7:30 PM Gloria Dei Choir	9 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM Girl Scouts Troop 881 - Preschool 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)	10 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM Diakonia (HR)
	15 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 10:00 AM Bible Study - (NT) 11:45 AM Keenagers 5:45 PM J.A.K.E. 5:45-7:15pm (HR) 6:30 PM Stephen Minister (SR) 7:30 PM Gloria Dei Choir	16 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM Girl Scouts Troop 881 - Preschool 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)	17 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM Diakonia (HR)
	22 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 10:00 AM Bible Study - (NT) 6:00 PM Juniors - GS Troop 888/ Brownies - GS Troop 36(TH/NT) 6:30 PM Stephen Minister (SR) 7:30 PM Gloria Dei Choir	23 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM Girl Scouts Troop 881 - Preschool 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)	24 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM Diakonia (HR)
	29 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 10:00 AM Bible Study - (NT) 6:30 PM Stephen Minister (SR) 7:30 PM Gloria Dei Choir	30 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 7:00 PM Girl Scouts Troop 881 - Preschool 8:00 PM A.A. (TH Sun/SR Fri)	31 O.A. Tues 7:30p/Sat 10:30a (GR) 6:30 AM A.A. (M-Sat.)- (SR) 9:00 AM Diakonia (HR)

Pinochle at the Hamel's on Saturday, January 3rd @ 7:00 p.m. Please bring a finger food to share & be ready to have a great time!



Pastor's
Lunch

Lunch with the Pastor will be the 2nd Thursday in January due to New Year's Day.

Join Pastor V for lunch on Thursday, January 8th, 2009 at 11:30 AM in Theisz Hall. There is a light lunch and time for questions, to hear updates about Apostles, Apostles Village and the church worldwide

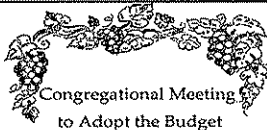


Keenagers

Keenagers will meet Thursday, January 15th, at 11:45 a.m. in Theisz Hall for their first luncheon of the New Year. Vernon & Lucille Ranum & Claudine Hampton.

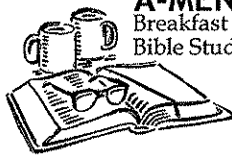
Please bring one of your favorite side dishes to go along with the lunch as well as your own tableware.

Keenagers is a group of men and women age 50 and over who meet the third Thursday of each month for socializing, potluck lunches, or going to local restaurants for lunch. You do not have to be a member of Apostles to attend.



Congregational Meeting
to Adopt the Budget

The 2009 proposed budget will be presented to the congregation on Sunday, January 25th following all three Worship Services. There will be copies of the budget available for everyone who attends the meeting. The Congregation's vote on the proposed budget will take place the following Sunday, Feb. 1st, using the same format. It is vitally important that members of Apostles family attend both of these meetings .



A-MEN
Breakfast &
Bible Study

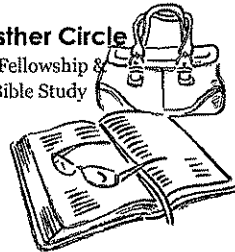
Saturday, January 3rd @ 8:00 AM
The men of Apostles—A-Men—meet the first Saturday of each month in North Theisz at 8:00 AM for a breakfast meeting, Bible Study and prayer. All men 18 and over are invited to join us for good food, fellowship and just to get together for 'man talk.'. Hope to see more of you there. Feel free to bring a friend... and your appetite!

Ladies this is the **BIG** night! We are choosing restaurants for the coming year. If you want to have your favorite place to eat on the list, and have a wonderful time too, join us on Sunday, January 4th, 7:00 PM at the *Ruby Tuesday Restaurant, State Road 60 in Valrico*. Let Debbie Nickeson know, at 684-8587, you want to be in on the count. Hope to see you all there!



Women's
Night Out

Esther Circle
Fellowship &
Bible Study



January 27th @ 10 AM in the Garden Room.
February 24th @ 10 AM in the Garden Room.
All women are welcome! Bring your favorite devotional to share with the group. Hope to see you on the 27th.



Extraordinary Women Conference
March 13-14, 2009
Idlewild Baptist Church, Tampa

Speakers & performers for this event will include; Julie Clinton, Chonda Pierce, Angela Thomas, Candace Cameron-Bure, Stormie Omartian, Michael O'Brian, Kathy Troccoli, Natalie Grant and the Children of the World Choir. There are group and Early Bird discounts available if we register by February 6th. Pricing through February 6th would be \$49.00/person for groups of 10+ or \$59/person for individuals.

Call Debbie Nickeson @ 813-689-8587 if you are interested in attending.

Support Groups



Grief Support Group resumes Tuesday, January 6th @ 7 PM

Have you lost a loved one—a spouse, parent, or other person close to you? You don't have to suffer your loss alone. A Grief Support Group, facilitated by JoAnne Whale, meets on Monday evenings in the Social Room at 7:30 p.m. Please call JoAnne Whale at 643-9896 if you have questions.



Apostles' Member will do light housekeeping, take you grocery shopping or to the doctor, run general errands for you or be a caregiver. If you are interested or have any questions call:

Judy Fields at 813-685-8117 or 813-313-9569.



Living Christ's Love We bear one another's burdens

In these uncertain economic times none of us is immune to difficulties. That is where our Christian family is able to step up and live out their discipleship. That is what we, at Apostles, are doing through the ministry of Living Christ's Love. If you are experiencing any hardships please call Linda Long at 335-9258, SueAnn Collinge or Liz Jimenez at 689-2571.

All calls and information are strictly confidential.



Apostles is currently supporting two Outreach community organizations; *ECHO and the Hunger Free Mission*. Hunger Free Mission's barrel will be in the Narthex during the month of January.

Apostles has also started an "Inreach" program that meets the needs of members of Apostles worshipping family; *Living Christ's Love*. The basket for Living Christ's Love will be in the Worship Center each week.

Thank you for your continuing and faithful support of these wonderful and necessary programs.

Beautiful Christian Sister

By Dr. Maya Angelou

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I'm not shouting 'I'm clean livin.'

I'm whispering 'I was lost, Now I'm found and forgiven.'

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I don't speak of this with pride.

I'm confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I'm not trying to be strong.

I'm professing that I'm weak and need His strength to carry on.

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I'm not bragging of success.

I'm admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I'm not claiming to be perfect.

My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I am worth it.

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I still feel the sting of pain...

I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say... 'I am a Christian', I'm not holier than thou,

I'm just a simple sinner who received God's good grace, somehow!

Saving Grace

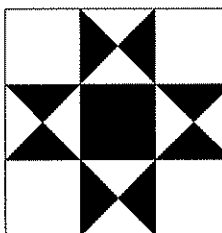


WOMEN OF THE ELCA



WELCA at a glance

Jan 2nd	<u>1st Friday Circle</u> Theisz Hall @ 7:00pm Quilting & a Guest Speaker
Jan 4th	<u>Women's Night Out</u> Ruby Tuesday—Valrico @ 7pm
Jan 8th	<u>Rebecca's Circle</u> Theisz Hall @ 130pm—430pm Quilting for Lutheran World Relief
Jan 27th	<u>Esther Circle</u> 10am in the Garden Room
Feb 6th	<u>1st Friday Circle</u> LAST Meeting before turning our Quilts in for LWR
Feb 9 - 13th	Turn in Quilts for LWR
Feb 12th	<u>Rebecca's Circle</u> Theisz Hall @ 130pm
Feb 24th	<u>Esther Circle</u> 10am in the Garden Room
February	Soup and Super Night St. Paul's Church
March 21st	Quilting for Project Linus Theisz Hall 830am - 4pm We will sew quilts from start to finish
April 18th	Spring Gathering



Watch,
in February,
for the
Blessing of
the Quilts!

Project Comfort
for
Lutheran World Relief

This has been a whirlwind year for the Quilting Group. The group has gathered, as a joint effort, twice this year with other Lutheran Churches in Hillsborough County to work on quilts. At each of these events there were over 7 quilts completed with another 5-10 that needed to be finished. This added another 30 quilts from the Tampa Area to be donated to Lutheran World Relief. The 1st Friday Circle of Apostles was the first group to host a day of quilting. It was very exciting to bring over 30 ladies together to work on such a GREAT project. The day created such a buzz and increased the interest to do these joint sewing days more often. Now we will try to get together 3-4 times a year at different locations.

The Group has been working diligently to get as many quilts done as possible before our February deadline. It is going so well there is a daytime circle sewing quilts. It is a wonderful ministry with the donations, the hard work, effort and a lot of time. Blessings to all for everything they do.



WOMEN OF THE ELCA



1st Friday Circle

January 2nd Meeting

Guest Speaker

from **Project Linus** (*Brandon Area*)

Project Linus is comprised of hundreds of local chapters and thousands of volunteers across the United States. Each volunteer and local chapter all work together to help us achieve our mission statement, which states...

First, it is our mission to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer "blanketeers."

Second, it is our mission to provide a rewarding and fun service opportunity for interested individuals and groups in local communities, for the benefit of children.

Together we have distributed over two million blankets to children in need since our inception in 1995.

www.projectlinus.org

* * * * *

1st Friday Circle will be taking **Saturday, March 21st** to sew Quilts for the local Brandon Area. They will go to the Brandon Hospital, the new Joshua House in Brandon, and other local areas of need. The quilts will be simple and assembled in the same style we are currently making but much smaller. We will focus on kids projects - so save the kid printed fabric for this wonderful new project. We would like to finish at least 10 small quilts. Watch for quilt patterns, homework assignments & updates on our bulletin board outside Theisz Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend and assist. We will really need some people to help iron, pin and keep us going. This is a great way to give back to our community.

Which Circle fits your Schedule?

Esther Circle

Meets the 4th Tuesday at 10:30 AM in the Garden Room.

Everyone brings a devotional to share with the group.

1st Friday Circle

Meets the 1st Friday of the Month at 7:00 PM in Theisz Hall.

This group has devotions and sews the evening away.

Rebecca Circle

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 1:30 PM in Theisz Hall. This group sews the afternoon away with devotions.

Our hope is that all women will come and be a part of one of these service/fellowship groups.

I'm Sorry You Missed It!

I was blessed this December to be able to attend the Advent Gathering at Faith Lutheran Church on Monday, December 8th. This was their 25th yearly Event. It was wonderful! The program focused on the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph's doubts and how everyone came to see the Holy Family. The afternoon ended on a GREAT note with a GREAT Message. The program is actually written by someone at their church every year (*different program every year*). We sang songs during portions of the program, said prayers during other portions and had some mediation time. It is a great way to start the holiday season, focusing on the real message of the celebration of Christmas, with other women from Tampa. We also enjoyed a selection of appetizers and we all made a chrismon (Christian Christmas decorations, see the trees in the Worship Center). I hope that all will have the opportunity to attend next year. It is so nice to start the season with a great message & relaxation with friends.

Submitted by Brenda Doggett

Three Times Blessed

Sharing the Gift of Stephen Ministry with Others

By Laura Wasson Warfel

"When you first hear that diagnosis of cancer, you wonder if you're going to die," said the Rev. Dr. Linda Line. "I needed someone to pray with me. I needed someone to listen and care."

While Dr. Line had known of Stephen Ministry for 14 years and had always wanted to have this ministry in her congregation, she first experienced this one-to-one distinctively Christian care as a care receiver at First Presbyterian Church, Visalia, California.

"When I was in the hospital, my Stephen Minister came and visited me there. When I went to sleep at night, I never knew whether I would wake up in my hospital bed or in heaven. She got me through those difficult times. She couldn't fix or change anything, but I knew I could share my fear, anxiety, and concern about life and death with her. I always knew I could call her, that I wasn't alone."

From Care Receiver to Stephen Minister

The care they received during a crisis has moved many care receivers to train as Stephen Ministers.

One day Joseph Little found himself wandering the streets of Houston alone, no longer employed, his marriage crumbling, searching for a place to live. A few weeks earlier he had moved to Houston with his family. "I had been a partner in a law firm, and I gave up my law practice to move back to my wife's hometown and work for her family's company," Joe said. "Shortly thereafter, I got served with divorce papers.

"So I found myself in a new city where I knew practically no one. No job. No wife. No kids, at least temporarily. It was a great personal crisis."

In his wanderings he caught sight of the steeple of First Presbyterian Church, where he had been married. He approached the associate pastor, who soon provided a Stephen Minister.

For 18 months Joe's Stephen Minister cared for him as he weathered the divorce and began rebuilding his life. In early 2005 Joe took Stephen Ministry training.

"Being a Stephen Minister has changed my life completely," he said. "It has given me skills that I use as a parent of two sons, in my personal relationships, and in my career as an attorney. I listen to people differently than I did before. It has changed every aspect of my life. I empathize so well with what people are going through because I've been a care receiver."

The Next Step: Equipping Others

For many, serving as a Stephen Minister isn't the end. They go on to become Stephen Leaders, equipping others to bring life-changing care to hurting people. And their experience as a care receiver is invaluable.

When Dr. Line arrived at Sierra Presbyterian Church in Nevada City, California, this past spring as associate pastor for adult spiritual development and care, she welcomed the opportunity to attend the Stephen Series Leader's Training Course in Ontario. Today she serves as Referrals Coordinator.

"As a pastor I know that there is no way I can give people the kind of care they need and deserve with a congregation of more than 600 members. Stephen Ministry is a vital part of the care our congregation provides.


"Because of my experience as a care receiver, I have more compassion and understanding for the fear a person can experience with a diagnosis of cancer or another debilitating disease," Dr. Line said. "My ministry is more effective because I've been through these experiences and made it through to the other side. The church must have a way to extend God's loving compassion and grace without exhausting the pastoral staff. Stephen Ministry does a great job of equipping gifted laypeople of the church to extend that care."

Passing the Blessing On to Others

Not all care receivers have the gifts, the time, or the desire to be Stephen Ministers. Not all Stephen Ministers become Stephen Leaders. But most who take all three steps will tell you that their Stephen Minister's care in their time of need made a real difference in their lives--and they look forward to giving back some of the gift they received through their service of caring and equipping others to care.



January Birthdays

1. Terry Welty	11. Frank Mittricker Eileen Dehnbostel Hannah Lovering	Krista Noren-Santmyer Paige Delaney Adrianna Klumb Austin West
2. Taylor Seibert	12. Zachary Podaril	25. Skip Brinkley
5. Sharon Marie Rentz Judy Fields	13. Tom Rydlewski Jenny West Jonathan Lambert Andrew Blaisuis	26. Skip O'Rourke Lee Caron
6. Margaret Lafferty John Wetjen James Smith Cassidy Dossin Megan Newill	14. Amy Dreyer	27. Bob Ledoux Jean Holler
7. Lois Riggsbee Peggy Desmarais	17. David Wilder Carol Monahan Suzette Brown	28. Gary Gasiorek Judy Beisecker Rachel Gray Alexis Klumb
8. Olivia Nicewinter Bradley Dixon	18. Betty Loraamm Wesley Rogers	29. Phil Haas Anna Rahr
9. James Lair	19. Jackson Myer	30. Helen Zaloski
10. Bren Ellison	20. Adeline Monin 21. Janet Wedlock Brett Reed	
	23. Jan Heintzel Dillon Smith Bailee Schommer	
	24. Aleeta Bice	


If we missed your birthday, or if there are any corrections, please call the office at 813-689-2571.
We may not have all the information we need for our membership records. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES
No changes in December

Apostles Member's Businesses



Express Oil Change & Service Center
321 W. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Seffner, Florida 33584
(813) 681-5152
Bill & Mary Ann Foelker, Owners



Renaissance Kham, Inc.
Kham Loraamm
President
Artisan in granite, tile, trim, paint
Interior home improvement
813-362-2067
Renaissance_kham@yahoo.com

Please support Apostles member's businesses!

OFFICE STAFF

C. Handlee Vige	Pastor
Dr. Neal Brown	Pastor for Spiritual Direction and Formation
SueAnn Collinge	Associate in Ministry
Kit O'Rourke	Coordinator for Children, Family & Education Ministries
Michele Van Epps	Coordinator for Youth, Young Adults & Drama Ministries
Ron Beisecker	Parish Administrator
James Carmichael	Organist and Choir Master
José Rivera	Music Director for Contemporary Worship
Sandra Sornson	Pre-School Director
Liz Jimenez	Office Sec'y/Receptionist
Corrine J. Lund	Editor of the Newsletters and the weekly bulletins.
Greg Prince	Sextons
Joe Bolton	
Ron Beisecker	Synod Deacons
Coleman Hill	
Joel Rentz	
Bert Seibert	
Bill Whitehead	

Catch the Excitement!
Witness the Joy!
Shape the Vision!

Our Vision

The Vision of Apostles Lutheran Church is to:

- 1) Introduce people to Jesus Christ**
- 2) Disciple members, and**
- 3) Serve the needs of people in our community and the world.**

January 2009

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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These ministries are undertaken
in faith TO THE GLORY OF GOD

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Fax: (813) 653-4919
Email: office@apostleslutheran.net
Website: ApostlesLutheran.net

Address Label Here

Sunday Worship Services

8:15 am Traditional
9:45 am Contemporary
11:15 am Traditional
Education Programs provided
from 8:30 am – 12 noon