



The Tie That Binds

The Newsletter of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church



Epiphany

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3
(10:30 AM)

Start the new year right with the example of the Wisemen! They said, “we have come to worship Him!” They knelt at His manger and offered Him gifts. We kneel at His altar for Holy Communion and present our offerings in thanksgiving for His love and mercy.

We commonly use the word *epiphany* to describe a revelation or an "aha" moment. The word *epiphany* has Greek origins, and it originally meant *appearance* or *manifestation*. The coming of Christ was first revealed to the Jewish world through the shepherds who heard the angelic announcement and ran to the stable to see for themselves. Through the wise men, Christ was revealed to the Gentile world. May this Epiphany season be a time of discovering or rediscovering God's love for all of us.

Have you ever thought of the things that the wise men did not know? Like Abraham, they set out on a journey, not knowing where it would take them (Hebrews 11:8). First of all, they did not know how long the trip would be when they decided to follow the star that appeared in the East. Secondly, they did not know how they would be received in the faraway foreign land. They did not know what the king would look like; nor did they know when or if they would return home. Yet they, like Abraham, chose to make the journey.

Following the light of God is a journey of similar faith. We often feel that we don't know where our journey will lead us, and we certainly never know what we will find along the way. We do, however, know that God goes before us, and with us, and that the journey is not in vain.

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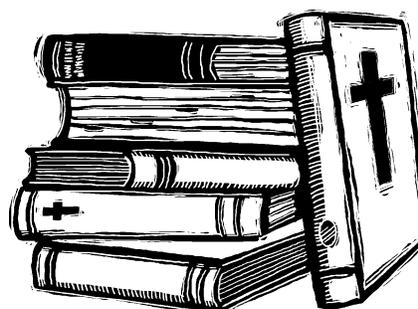
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The Tie That Binds is produced by and for the members of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, and any opinions expressed are those of the author. If you have comments, questions or concerns about *The Tie That Binds*, you can contact any of the council members or write to:
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New Bible Study Series

CARING FOR INACTIVE MEMBERS

(Re-turning: Church as Home)

WEDNESDAYS – 7:00PM

(January 6 – February 10, 2010)

You undoubtedly encounter friends, relatives, neighbors, and work associates who are inactive members of Christian congregations. Few people join a congregation intending to become inactive. But something happens – within the individual, in the congregation, or both – that changes people's initial commitment, and they drop out. Research indicates that about a third of every congregation's members are inactive. What a fertile mission field!

Our Wednesday evening study will equip us with the knowledge and experience to connect effectively with them, build our skills and confidence, in compassionately reaching out to them without driving them further away. We all have a part to play in helping the missing find their way back home. A study guide will be provided.

Church Members	Outreach Disciples
Committed to the church	Committed to Christ
Managing committees	Deploying missions
Holding offices	Doing hands-on ministry
Making decisions	Making disciples
Trained for membership	On a life-long quest for quality
Serving at the church	Serving in the world
Preoccupied with raising money	Preoccupied with rescuing people
Retiring from church work	Finding personal fulfillment
Surveying internal needs	Pursuing constant personal growth
Eager to know everyone	Sensitized to community
Loyal to each other	Eager for everyone to know God
Building faith on information	Drawn to the unchurched
Perpetuating a heritage	Build faith on experience with Christ
	Envisioning a future

In general, if a congregation is really preoccupied with the characteristics on the left, it will be more like a private club. If a congregation is really preoccupied with the characteristics on the right, it will probably fall apart within a few months, because there is not enough structure or organization to make it work. Ideally, you should not be one extreme or the other, but there should be a balance between them.

**Committed to the Church vs.
Committed to Christ**

There is absolutely nothing wrong with loyalty to a church, but the emphasis should be on commitment to Christ, the Head of the church. He is the one we are committed to, not the Organization itself.

**Managing committees vs.
Deploying missions**

In many congregations, considerable time is spent on managing committees or boards. Some think that many meetings makes for ministry. Church meetings are like the huddle in a football game. You don't score in the huddle. You gotta snap the ball and go!

**Holding offices vs.
Doing hands-on ministry**

Lay leaders serving in elected positions is obviously a good thing. But when it becomes too much about being an officer in the church and less about doing real hands-on ministry, the result is membership maintenance, not disciples making disciples.

Making decisions vs. Making disciples

It is good to make God-pleasing and affirming decisions, but too often our decisions are to withhold permission if we don't like exactly what is going on. A little negative can go a long way to stifle things, especially during times of conflict.

**Trained for membership vs.
On a life-long quest for quality**

To those who say, "I've been confirmed, I don't have to do anything more to be a Lutheran," we might ask, "Do you then have an eighth-grade understanding of your faith? Do you also have an eighth-grade understanding of your profession or anything else in life?" Disciples are life-long learners and strive for excellence.

**Serving at the church vs.
Serving in the world**

The Lord did not say, "Build it and they will come." He did say, "Go, and make disciples." Much work needs to be done to have a church ready for new people, but we need to focus on the people out there.

**Preoccupied with raising money vs.
Preoccupied with rescuing people**

It takes a substantial amount of money to keep a church and programs going successfully. Raising money is definitely needed and we should not be afraid to ask for money for His mission. But the emphasis is raising money to rescue people, not to preserve an institution.

**Doing church work vs.
Finding personal fulfillment**

Give people a chance to do what they want to do in their church. Ask yourself, "What do I enjoy doing? What is my passion?" Then, after determining this, do church work in your passion area. This is the most fulfilling way to serve the Lord: Ministry laced with passion.

**Retiring from church work vs.
Pursuing constant personal growth**

It is a great sadness to me when I hear older folks say, "Been there, done that. Let the younger ones take their turn. I'm burned out. I don't want to do church work anymore." I encourage you to pursue constant personal growth, constant serving of the Lord. Do it with all of your might and with great joy. Do what you enjoy and then dedicate it to Jesus.

**Surveying internal needs vs.
Sensitized to community**

There is a tendency to say, "We need to work on internal needs and our own members. After we take care of our own, we will get to community outreach later." If we only focus in here, we will never get out there.

Eager to know everyone vs.**Eager for everyone to know God**

If you have more than one worship service, then you actually have more than one congregation at your church. Our heart's passion and goal is that everyone know God in Christ Jesus and therefore we are willing to give up some of that "knowing everyone."

Loyal to each other vs.**Drawn to the unchurched**

While it may be helpful to be loyal to our fellow church members, our emphasis should be on touching the unchurched. You can say, "This is a friendly church." It may be to you, or to the particular group you identify with in your congregation, but it may not be to a visitor or even another member. You have to shape and direct friendliness and warmth. It does **not** just happen. It needs to be intentional.

Building faith on information vs.**Build faith on experience with Christ**

Lutherans tend to focus on education—a great attribute—but sometimes at the expense of experience. We seem to think if we can pour enough information into the brain, we can change people's behavior. The new life in Christ includes a personal experience with Jesus Christ. It is both knowledge and experience with the living Lord that changes lives.

Perpetuating a heritage vs.**Visioning a future**

We have a very beautiful heritage in the Lutheran church. There are a whole lot of wonderful things that have happened in our rich history to be pleased and proud of. Our church body did not just merely evolve. It did not come to be overnight. It took the hard work—blood, sweat and tears—of many individuals who carried the torch, over many decades and even centuries to bring us to where we are now. It was built by people, with God's gracious blessings and yes, even His forgiveness. However, we **do not want to live in the past**. Someone once said, "The past is an excellent

classroom, but it is a lousy place to live." I fervently pray that each church can see its best days in the **future**, not in the **past**. Yes, the future may be quite different than what we are used to, what we have grown comfortable with, but envisioning the future and building for it is the way we can keep our church alive in Jesus.

The Five-Monkey Illustration

A number of years ago, a group of scientists took five monkeys and put them in a room. The scientists leaned a ladder against the wall and hung some bananas at the top of the ladder. It didn't take long for one of the monkeys to see the bananas, and of course, he was created by God to desire that which was good for him, so he headed up the ladder to get the bananas. The scientists, who were watching closely, immediately hosed down this monkey and the other four monkeys with cold water. They rolled that one off the ladder and got all the monkeys totally wet.

Every time one of monkeys headed up the ladder toward the bananas, they, along with the other four, would be hosed down with cold water. This continued until the five monkeys stopped climbing the ladder. Then the scientists put the hoses away. They were no longer needed. Then they took out one of the wet monkeys and replaced him with one dry monkey. The dry monkey looked around and spied the bananas at the top of the ladder. He headed up the ladder to get the bananas, but an interesting thing happened. He was immediately attacked by the other four wet monkeys and was knocked off the ladder. This continued to happen until he also stopped climbing the ladder.

Then the scientists took out another wet monkey and replaced him with another dry one. That monkey quickly started up the ladder to get the bananas; he was also immediately attacked by the three wet and one dry monkey, and knocked off the ladder. They didn't know why, but they did know this, "You don't do that here." This experiment continued until eventually, all the wet monkeys had been

exchanged for five dry monkeys. Amazingly, they would not climb the ladder, and they made sure that no one else climbed the ladder either.

Learnings that come from significant changes in people's lives are like quantum leaps. They form the very identity and core values of a person or group. In every congregation's history, there have been significant key events that cause behavioral changes and have helped establish identity and core values. These core values develop a culture—a historical context. Events can affect change positively or negatively. These key events, along with the congregation's identity and core values, all help us in deciding if we will be church members or Christian disciples. Are you personally ready to risk climbing the ladder . . . in order to bring Christ to people and people to the Church?



Choir festival sends Advent across the ocean

Swaying to the rhythm of the music, a choir from the Oromo community captured hearts at a Winnipeg Advent festival. More than 280 members of Red River Circuit congregations filled the pews and aisles at Saint James Lutheran Church Sunday, December 6 to celebrate Advent with music and to support LCC's foreign student fund. Five choirs and two soloists brought the message of Christ's coming in a service based on Responsive Prayer in Lutheran Service Book.

Lutheran Church-Canada President Robert Bugbee preached on Isaiah 52:7 which talks about the beautiful feet of those who preach Good News. He noted how God is using LCC to enable the spread of the Gospel, especially in Ukraine. "From this service we are sending Advent over the ocean," he said, referring to how the offering from the service will support preparing future leaders of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU).

The service included choirs from Immanuel; Good Shepherd; Saint James; and a joint choir from Beautiful Savior and Lutheran Church of the Redeemer.

For many the highlight of the evening came when members of the East African Oromo community sang two songs, swaying to the rhythm of the music. The previously quiet congregation broke into applause following the first song, expressing appreciation for this unique contribution. The leader of the Oromo group is currently enrolled in LCC's Pastors with Alternate Training program. His instructor, Pastor Richard Beinert, adjunct professor of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, is also pastor of Immanuel in Winnipeg.

A committee from the circuit organized the event, the second this year. In May a similar gathering at Peace Lutheran Church focused on funding the final construction stages of a seminary building for which Concordia Lutheran Mission Society (CLMS) was gathering funds. That event raised almost \$20,000. Envelopes distributed to congregation members throughout the city continued arriving at CLMS so that by the end of the summer both CLMS Ukraine projects, including the seminary construction, were fully funded.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League News

A group of ladies learned how to do card making on the afternoon of Sunday, November 1st. Under the leadership of Linda Rodewald and her friend Deb Bratanic, the card making experts, we were shown how to create five beautiful Christmas cards. For most of us, this was our first attempt at this craft, and we all had a great time. Cards that were made to give away were mailed out to those for whom we pray for and think about.

On December 1st, the LWML-C held their annual Christmas party. A total of 14 ladies were in attendance. We ordered in Chinese food. Fellowship for the evening began with a devotion entitled "The Blessings of Christmas Today." We had 11 baby layettes donated, which were delivered to the Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The evening ended with fun, as we had a lot of laughs with the white elephant gift exchange.

With the help of the members of our congregation, we completed 39 "Warm Feet for the Street" woolen socks for Main Street Project. Thanks to Phyllis and Peter Dueck for delivering the socks. When the socks were delivered, they said the men using the emergency shelter and detoxification unit services, appreciated the socks very much. They would all make good use of the warm socks and the men's toiletries.

Our Beautiful Savior's Christmas Hamper committee was able to provide 20 families from Villa Rosa and 5 families from Osborne House with hampers this year. As we heard from these agencies' presentations at our meetings, these hampers truly helped their clients in need this Christmas.

Beautiful Savior is once again scheduled to volunteer with the food program at Siloam Mission on Saturday, February 6th, from 11:30 to 2:30. Anyone interested in helping, please sign the sheet posted at the back of the church. Siloam Mission provides programs to Winnipeg's inner-city community, offering hope and healing to those experiencing poverty and homelessness. Come join us to share God's love and make a difference together.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 5th at 7:00 pm. All ladies of our congregation are welcome to join us for our LWML-C work night. Bring a pair of scissors to help us with cutting and counting Campbell soup labels. On Tuesday, February 2nd, our guest is Sandy Belisle, the Ministry Leader of Lutheran Urban Ministry. We also continue to encourage fellowship as we serve coffee and goodies once every month.

Lorraine Weir,
President, Beautiful Savior
LWML-C





A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MOHR

Things I Don't Need in the New Year

God is the giver of all good things. Trusting in this, I find that I often treat prayer like a Christmas list, asking Him for the things that I want and that I need in my life. It's possible that He can't give me what I really need until I let go of a few things, such as old habits, and make more room. So I'm going to start this new year by listing some needs that, with God's help, I won't need in the new year.

I'll ask the Father to take away:

My need to be appreciated.

I don't need praise from those around me. My God is the only one I want to impress. It is His approval that counts. John 12:43

My need to 'fit in'.

Romans 12:2 and 1 Peter 1:14 tells me that I am not to conform to the pattern of the world around me but I must be transformed by the renewing of my mind.

My need to appear smart.

I don't need to be a great speaker to share the good news of Jesus Christ. The power is in the message of the gospel, not in my words. 1 Corinthians 1:17-21

My need to be physically attractive.

Other people look at physical appearance, but they don't see what the Lord sees. He sees my heart. 1 Samuel 16:7

My need to be first.

Paul writes that I shouldn't look for what is good for me, but I should be concerned with what is good for others. 1 Corinthians 10:24

My need to be wealthy.

Luke 16:13 tells me that God and money cannot both have first place in my life. Luke 16:19-26 tells a story that warns against putting too much value on possessions. I'll put God first and leave the rest to Him.

My need to be strong.

My own strength is never enough but the Bible tells me that God's power can be displayed best when I am weak. 2 Corinthians 12:9&10

My need to be 'good enough.'

I always try to be good and do what is right, but no matter how hard I work at it, I always fail. I will always fall short of God's glory. The amazing thing is that by His grace and through the work of Jesus Christ. I can rest in the fact that I am good enough. Romans 4:25 and Romans 6:18-19