

## Woulda, Coulda Shoulda

(Pats Pondering from the Pews)

I shoulda done more to achieve my goals, I coulda done this instead of that- I woulda done that if I had known this--- sound familiar??



natures.

**New Years Day** brings many of us to make resolutions that, like last year we coulda, woulda, shoulda but didn't fulfill or make any attempt to actually do. Or our resolve lasted but a few days and we caved into our weaker

Most of us make resolutions to lose weight, exercise more, eat healthy, cut back on chocolate, spend more time with family or friends. The list is as varied as there are people, isn't it? Now what does this have to do with our faith walk? How do we re-solve or re-form or deepen our faith or re-awaken our relationships with Jesus and each other?

Did you know that there are over 4000 words with 're' used as a prefix and that 're' comes from the ancient Greek and means to go 'back again' What does all this Re- stuff have to do with Epiphany and the church or us as individuals or collectively?

If we recall that Epiphany is a "Eureka" ( I found it or I get it) and sometimes called an 'aha' moment in time where enlightenment comes to us in a revelation of a greater truth, such as the Magi had when they encountered the Christ Child for the first time. They had to re-think their beliefs and re-plot their travel plans. In our era, many orthodox Christians celebrate this visit on January 6 each year also named the 12<sup>th</sup> night.

When we travel into Ukiah ( our deep valley) of the scriptures we discover that there is always a greater truth waiting for us to discover. We often have a breakthrough that follows a process of significant thought when this new information comes to light. Our aha moment!

As a people who embrace a Lutheran understanding in our theology, we confess that we are a re-forming church, a restorative church, refreshed church, and a re-doing church. So it is that we must re-consider or re-trace and re-center ourselves in the scriptures.



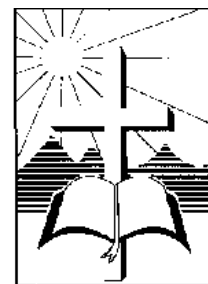
So this year, instead of making all those resolutions that we know we will not keep or have no intentions of keeping, lets resolve to deepen our faith walk in some manner.

What would happen if all of us were to change and what could we achieve when all of us should happen to do what Lutherans do best and that is to be a confessing reformation congregation.

Some great ideas to consider for our edification and growth are:

- \* Bring your bible to church every Sunday and read along with the lessons and gospel from your bible.
- \*Double your daily prayer time from what you currently practice.
- \*Take time to offer table grace in public spaces
- \*Worship occasionally with the people at the opposite service you normally attend.
- \*Invite a person or family to church at least once a month, every month.
- \*Embrace and accept changes gracefully.
- \*Complement someone on what they did right and not criticize what went wrong.
- \*Celebrate your uniqueness, God does!
- \*Expect and embrace the unexpected gifts of Grace that the Lord has for you.

Epiphany does come when your woulda, coulda, shoulda, gets turned inside out and priorities are placed in the right order.



## More Churchie Words

**Dogma**-a principle or belief that is controvertibly true.

**Doctrine**- a belief taught by individual church bodies

**Creed**- a formal statement of beliefs

**Liturgy**- a formula or ritual for public worship

**Grace**- undeserved favor

## Faith Girlz



Bringing back lots of pleasant memories for me as I report on this fine group of young ladies. All that is missing is the taffy pull. Sigh!!!!

The ladies will be having a movie night this month, complete with jammies, pillows and blankets to lounge in or on And will munch on popcorn and snackies while they watch a great movie. They meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fri of the month at 5:30 pm

## Penny Ministry for law enforcement K-9 unit



Support our Sunday School youth in their penny ministry. Every donation of penny's in the offering plate goes to support our local law enforcement K-9 units. Last year they raised little over

\$142.00. Let's see if we can help them go higher!!

**Warming tree** still looking for those donations of socks and hats. Donations will go to Plowshares, Ukiah's Community Soup Kitchen. Deadline for this event is Jan 10<sup>th</sup>

**Confirmation** resumes every Sunday in Fellowship hall with Pastor Martha. They meet from 4 to 5pm.

## Annual Congregational Meeting

**12 noon sharp in fellowship hall on Jan 24. We will vote on new budget as well as incoming council, endowment, and nominating persons.**

## Community Outreach

A widow/widowers group will be utilizing our fellowship hall on a monthly basis beginning this month. This group will reach out into the greater Ukiah community for all who lost a spouse or mate to death. Due to the sensitivity of this issue, this will be a closed group. We ask that all our members be respectful of their time and space needs.

## Mendocino County Art Association

This great group will again utilize our facility to further their learning in fine art. They will be here Jan 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 5pm Please be respectful of their time.



## Holy Spirit Moves & Blessings abound !

Heating system went out in parsonage right at Advent time, (waiting time) but Pr Martha and Paul did not have to wait long for triple blessings to arrive. Fire wood showed up, enough to last the entire winter in the trucks of the Chadd's, Prax's and Connormon's. and each had not conferred with the others' Now if that isn't the Holy Spirit moving through the congregation. WOW!

**IF YOU'RE GETTING OUR NEWSLETTER FOR THE FIRST TIME, PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES, IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME TO UPDATE OUR ADDRESS LISTINGS FOR SO MANY.**

**TO KEEP UP TODATE YOU CAN ALSO VISIT GRACE'S WEB SITE AT: [www.gracelutheranukiah.com](http://www.gracelutheranukiah.com) then take the time to friend us on social media (facebook)**

We are indeed a community of ordinary people celebrating an extraordinary God as we grow in faith, serve in love and proclaim God's grace.

## Around the Synod News

The 2009 national assembly passed a resolution to encourage each synod's bishop to start a 'Reconciling in Christ' Congregation. One in our synod is now in place in Fresno. The congregation fully embraces LGBT persons. The ELCA did not take any position on the blessings of same gender marriages, but will allow it if they are permitted by law in the individual state.

(approx. 500 ELCA congregations nationwide have now disassociated themselves from the ELCA)

Presiding bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, encourages support and acceptance of refugees from Syria according to 11/19/15 synod newsletter

The SPS newsletter states that our synod is now a "Reconciling in Christ Synod".

Mt Cross (in Aptos) announced men's retreat is scheduled for 4/1-3/2016 and the Fall Family retreat on 10/21-23/2016. See their web for additional info.

Church wide GRACE GATHERING in New Orleans in August 2016.

## Trinity & St Michael's of Ft Bragg



Trinity Lutheran in Ft Bragg in conjunction with and in full communion with St Michael's, an Episcopal congregation now share a pastor. The new pastor is **Randy Knutson**, an Episcopal priest, who was installed in late Nov.

**The 2016 Synod Assembly will be held in Reno at the Grand Sierra Resort on June 3-5, 2016**

*Quote from a friend that is too good not to share. On change. "Walked across the room and hit a new perspective"*

## Group Photo's in January



as our web site.

The editor of this newsletter will be taking informal pictures of the various groups throughout the month of Jan for inclusion in future GRACELINES as well

## -----On Discipleship

Disciples are teachable or a learner who follows the teacher. They abide in Christ, are doers of the Word, loves the brethren, bears much fruit, has a lifestyle that brings glory to God, and puts Christ first in all.

How does one do this? We find the answer in scripture: by responding to God's call (Isaiah 6:8), doing the work prepared for us (Eph 2:10), working while it is day (John 9:4) among others,

Focusing on why we are here as a body of believers and who is in and who is not in, often requires us to be transformed in the renewing of our mind. This paradox is a new way of looking at something or new ideas and does create a shift in our thinking as we ask ourselves "how am I or we a lampstand to others either individually or corporately?"

Change or transformation usually brings struggle and conflict, however, that is the price of progress. And in all things most do not like change. Some prefer to put in a little toe to test the water so to speak before adopting a change, others might wade in while others jump in and embrace change. However we must remember that God is with us for nothing is impossible for God.

## In Remembrance

It is with both sadness and joy that we report to you that mother to Beverly Spence, (Henrietta) **Joe Steinke**, has gone to her eternal home with Jesus in late November. As per her request, a private family service will be held in Sacramento.

Joe, a long time member, is remembered for the numerous shopping trips she made on behalf of senior citizens as well as the beautiful handwritten notes of encouragement and her ready smile.





Our bare tree found Bear Connomon caught hanging items on WARMING TREE in December, thanks to the generosity of the people of God.



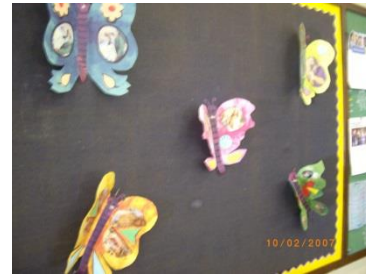
The overflow of your gifts to warm people in need.



Our talented Praise team at practice. Roger Coate, Joanie Dunn, Tyler Brisco, Debbie Coate with Shelia Prax on the piano. Missing is Dennis Hadley.



Beautifully decorated Bulletin Board is ready as a backdrop for photos. Thanks to Cheryl Johnson for her creative hard work



Caughta----Jon Telschow & Steve Prax dipping in the candy bags. Christmas gift bags for confined Seniors that participate in the Meals on Wheels Program.



Many hands make for light work! Here is Jan Carlson and one of the youth choosing items to put in Christmas gift bags for the greater community home bound elders.

Bags abound—over 125 of them filled to the brim!



Thanks to Thrivent for the donation of the contents and the many willing hands at Grace who filled them.

## Pearls of Wisdom from the Pastor's Pen

By now the  
Services are



Christmas Eve  
over. All of the  
presents have been unwrapped. The leftovers have  
been either eaten or frozen. The paper and ribbons  
have been put in the trash can. We have even had  
the Sunday after Christmas. I don't know about you  
but I am tired!

Back when I was teaching one of my coworkers was  
talking at lunch about cleaning everything up after  
Christmas. She told me that in her hurry to get all  
of the paper and packing stuff out from under the  
Christmas Tree she accidentally picked up the baby  
Jesus from her Nativity scene and threw it away. I  
was concerned for her and asked if she had gone  
through the trash and found it. She laughed at me  
and said it wasn't worth the effort. She would just  
buy a new one next year.

Unfortunately that is how many people view Jesus  
and their faith. After Christmas Jesus gets put in a  
box or even thrown away until next year when we  
bring him out again. Sometimes we "bring" Jesus  
out at Easter only to put him away again until  
Christmas.

The cry at Christmas of "Peace on earth good will  
toward men" can only happen if we keep Jesus out  
of the box all year long. This New Year try to keep  
Jesus out and with you all the time. Remember it is  
through Jesus' love and forgiveness that we are  
truly saved. We do not change our actions toward  
others in order to be saved. We change our actions  
towards others because we are saved.

In this New Year, May the peace of God which  
passes all understanding keep your hearts and  
minds on Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peace,

Pastor Martha

## Your Council at work in Dec



Treasurer ---giving slightly down as are expenses  
Call team--- nothing to report  
Stewardship---70% of pledge cards returned  
2016 Budget Team---prepared, presented and  
approving for submission to congregational vote  
Hospitality---Approved a 12 step program request to  
use FH on 1<sup>st</sup> Thurs of each month beginning in Jan.  
Property---another discussion regarding security and  
locked FH door during and between services  
---solar power discussed, council not interested  
pursuing at this time  
Nominating Team---thanked for their hard work  
Worship & Music---Tyler B. will play piano for 2<sup>nd</sup> service  
beginning in Jan.  
Christmas Gift Cards to be presented to paid staff

REMINDER of annual meeting Jan 24 with annual  
reports due in office.

## December news from around our Synod

According to the 12/10 synod news letter

\*29<sup>th</sup> annual Synod Assembly to be held in Reno, June 3-5, 2016

\*30 churches in some stage of transition for pastoral leadership

\* 9 congregations have newly called pastors

\*8 pastors have retired

\*PLTS (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary) now offering 2 on line courses for learning or continuing education.