

# GRACE NOTES

DECEMBER 2011

## “He Came Down!”

While attending a workshop, the leader walked to the blackboard and drew an arrow pointing down. He said, “It’s all about this” as he pointed to the arrow. Again, he said, “It’s all about this.”



*18* “Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,” (Matthew 1:18-23)

Jesus came down to show us the way to heaven. Jesus came down to reveal the very heart of God. Jesus came down!

One very unique principal of the Christian faith is that God comes to us, rather than any effort on our part to somehow go up to God. The Gospel story begins with our inability to get up to God. We simply have no means to do such a thing. There is a separation that cannot be crossed or transcended. However, God’s plan to bridge the gap is to come down to us in Jesus Christ.

I believe that all of our beliefs and principals of faith can be lumped up in this one brief phrase “It’s all about God coming down.” As to why and how God comes down is the rest of the Gospel. Yet, it begins very simply, God comes down for you and for me.

I pray this simple yet profound truth may guide your hearts and minds through this Advent and Christmas season.

Together in Christ,  
Pr. Ron Nichols

# News from GLC Ministries

## Fall Semi-Annual Meeting Recap

The fall semi-annual meeting of the congregation was held on November 13. Members attending the meeting approved both the proposed 2012 church budget and the "A Strong Heritage for a Stronger Tomorrow" capital campaign.

Those in attendance also received and approved annual reports from the ministries and various church organizations and funds.

## Worship and Music Ministry

Plans are being made for Advent and Christmas worship services. The schedule for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services will remain the same as recent years, including the traditional Christmas Eve Prelude at 5:00pm. Christmas Day is a Sunday this year so there will be only one service that Sunday morning.

Two new Christmas trees have also been donated for this Advent/Christmas season. Worship & Music organizes the decorating of the trees and thanks those who donate this year and every year.

## Stewardship Ministry

Members are working on promoting options for Grace members to participate in grain tithing and donations. There are many advantages for the church and farmer with this program that is already in place at local elevators.

## Finance Ministry

The proposed 2012 budget was approved at the semi-annual meeting. Next year's budget will actually be less than this year's approved budget was. Giving for 2011 continues to be strong and the Finance Ministry is grateful for the faithful giving of Grace members so far this year.

**Ministry Night is December 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Parish Planning Council meets at 6:45pm  
Ministries meet at 8:00pm

## Grace Lutheran Parish Planning Council

Rhonda Olson, President  
Jason Berghorst, President-Elect  
Don Dinger, Vice-President  
Sherri Thompson, Treasurer  
Cary Radisewitz, Secretary  
  
Greg Spath, Evangelism Ministry  
Paula Lammert, Finance Ministry  
Kenny Scheidt, Property Ministry  
Jodi Rops, Learning Ministry  
Marv Fuerstenberg, Parish Care Ministry  
Kim Schmidt, Worship & Music Ministry  
Curt Thorson, Stewardship Ministry  
Leah Radisewitz, Young Peoples Ministry  
  
Pastor Ron Nichols and Pastor Josh Enderson

## Learning Ministry

Preparations for the Sunday School Christmas program are underway. The program, "The ABCs of Christmas", is scheduled for Sunday, December 11, in the afternoon.

Many Milestones have been given to children during worship in the month of November. This program continues to grow as it shares our faith with our younger generation.

## Young Peoples Ministry

Youth served a delicious lunch at the Semi-Annual meeting on November 13 as a fundraiser for their trip to New Orleans for the National Youth Gathering this summer. Voucher sales continue to be going well.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class and their parents are working on the Grace Lutheran float for the Winterfest parade. The Synod Junior High Youth Gathering was held in Willmar on November 17-18. Young Peoples Ministry is working to plan one more large youth event to be held before Christmas.

## **A Strong Heritage for a Stronger Tomorrow Capital Campaign Information**

Members of the congregation approved the proposed capital campaign at the fall semi-annual congregational meeting on November 13. Those in attendance voted to complete the proposed projects, approved conducting a campaign to raise funds to complete the projects, and approved borrowing any remaining funds necessary to complete the projects.

The Executive Ministry will now be working with the Property Ministry, Finance Ministry, and members of the Facilities Needs Task Force that developed the proposal to determine a plan for the completion of the various projects. Projects such as the new windows and roof may be the first to begin.

The actual capital campaign is tentatively scheduled to occur in January and February. Pastor Ron is working to form the capital campaign leadership team that will conduct the formal campaign with the help of Pastor Mark Halaas from the Key Stewardship Leaders program offered by the ELCA.

Much more information about the projects and the campaign will be shared soon. We have a very exciting year ahead as we work together to fund and complete projects that will build on our strong heritage to strengthen our mission and ministry both inside and outside our church walls! Praise God for His faithfulness and the faithfulness of His people here at Grace Lutheran Church!

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### *Thank you...*

The Worship Music Ministry is grateful for the generous gifts given for the Christmas Season:

- The 12' sanctuary Christmas tree given in memory of Norman and Ellen Aanenson from their family
- The balcony decoration given in memory of Orville and Rosemary Aanenson from their children and grandchildren
- The 9' Christmas tree donated by the Papik family
- Monetary donations for the purchase of decorations from Larry and Janice Nelson and Margaret Vegge

# Grace Lutheran Church Women December, 2011

Be joyful always; --- pray continually; --- give thanks in all circumstances, ---)  
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. | Thess 5:16-18

Notes from the GLCW Ex Bd:

- \*Thank you to Lorna Harms and Mary Akkerman who have consented to be assistants to Funeral Groups Leader, Gladys Siebenahler.
- \* Thanks to Mabel Overgaard (283-4912) who will assist Arla Bakken (283-4855) with the Prayer Chain. Anyone can call Arla or Mabel to activate the Prayer Chain.
- \*Thanksgiving Baskets delivered on Nov 15<sup>th</sup> went to over 50 people.
- \*Special Friends changes per Circle were discussed.
- \* We reviewed GLCWomen positives for 2011; possibilities for 2012. (Feel free to comment on either to circle leaders or Ex Bd members.)

++Our Thanksgiving Offering of \$503 is divided between the ELCA Disaster Fund and the Rock County Food Shelf.

++ The GLCW approved an 'end of year' gifting of \$2,000. Of that, an additional amount is given to the Rock County Food Shelf to equal a total of \$1,000. The remaining amount was also designated to the ELCA Disaster Fund for the "Horn of Africa Drought". The countries of Somalia and Ethiopia are experiencing the worst drought in 60 years. Millions of people are affected with 500,000 of the 2.2 million *children* facing *imminent* life threatening conditions.  
May the Lord bless our giving and stir our hearts to 'see'.....

\*\* We still have a need of a Treasurer(s) by Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, for one or two persons.  
--keeping monthly computer records of finances and/or attending Ex.Bd. meetings to review the report and be part of decision making/check writing....  
If you or someone you know may be willing, call Donna or any Bd member.  
Alice Bjerrum, (449-3610), current treasurer, will be happy to visit about the position.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- +Dec 8 and 29 MIA (Missions in Action)- 8:30 to 12:30
- +Dec 6, Tuesday, EX BD (**note time**)- 9 a.m. – EX BD and GLC staff appreciation.
- + Dec 8-Thursday, GLCWomen & Men – 2:00 P.M. Christmas Carol Sing Along and Treats

Pray- Give Thanks- Rejoice  
Donna Dahlen 283-2932

### **"A Christmas Tea" (coffee too) - Thursday Dec. 8th, 2 pm.**

GLCWomen and Men are invited to a Christmas Carol Sing Along and Christmas Treats.

Please bring treats to share for the "Treat Table".

The GLCW Ex Bd will furnish small sandwiches and beverages.

*"Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long;  
Let every heart prepare a throne And every voice a song."*



## **Missions in Action** December 1 and 29, 2011 8:30 to 12:30

First of all, we want to thank everyone who helped with the Thanksgiving baskets. We appreciate the help in putting them together and the delivery of them. 54 people received baskets.

Thanks, too, for the mittens, caps, scarves, etc. that you have given for SHARE. This, as well as what we saved back from the rummage sale this summer, will be brought to SHARE this week. As you know, all of these items stay in Rock County.

Just a reminder of winter weather policy. If we cancel Missions in Action, we will send an e-mail to those of you who have e-mail (if we don't have yours, please let us know what it is) and we'll try to call the rest of you. Chances are, we won't cancel unless the weather is really bad. But, if you are not comfortable being on the road or out in the weather, please stay home. Even though what we are doing is important, it is more important that you are safe.

Merry Christmas! May God's blessings be upon you this Christmas.

Ardie and Mary

*Thank You...* to everyone who helped make the Soup Supper a success again this year. Special thanks to Gladys Siebenahler and Pam Dobson for making soup. Gladys also donated the crackers. Thanks to Glen Gust for donating the hamburger for the chili and Florence Helle for donating the cheese. Thanks to Arla Bakken for the pumpkins and talent for decorating the tables. Thanks to everyone who made phone calls, brought a dessert or chicken, gave money for expenses or worked before or during the Supper. Thanks to Larry and Lorna Harms for their extra work setting up tables and cleaning up afterwards. And finally, thanks to the Rock County Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutheran for adding \$500.00 to our total proceeds. We are able to send a check to ELCA World Hunger for over \$2500.00.

Lona Klosterbuer and Arlene Bendix, Co-Chairs



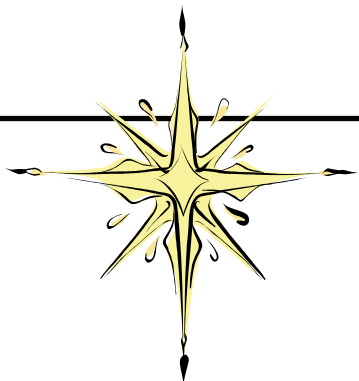
## **Ride and Dine**

Our next scheduled trip for the "Ride and Dine" event will be Sunday, December 4th to go to First Lutheran, Worthington for their Lutefisk and Meatball dinner. Get tickets from Pastor Ron and meet in the parking lot at 4:00 PM. First Lutheran will also provide a Nordic program and music. Cost per ticket is \$14. Everyone is invited.

## **Grain Tithing for Grace Lutheran Church**

The stewardship committee would like to explain and encourage the concept of "grain tithing." Grain Tithing is another way some are able to give of their gifts to Grace Lutheran Church. The program is simple to use and readily available at all of the area elevators. If you would like to use this program as a way to support Grace, simply inform the elevator that you wish to designate a portion of the sale to Grace Lutheran Church. The elevator will contact the church for the sale of the grain, and the receipt from the elevator can then be used for end-of-the-year tax purposes. We would like to heartily thank all who offer this generous gift in support of our church.

**CHRISTMAS  
WORSHIP  
SERVICES**



Sunday, December 11:

4:00 pm Sunday School  
Christmas Program

Saturday, December 24:

3:00 pm Christmas Eve  
Family Worship

5:00 pm Music Prelude  
5:30 pm Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Worship

Sunday, December 25:

8:15 am Pre-recorded Radio  
Broadcast

10:00 am Christmas Day  
Worship  
No Sunday School or  
Adult Study

**Order Your  
Poinsettias**



It has been a tradition to decorate the sanctuary and the church with poinsettia plants. You are invited to purchase a plant in memory or in honor of someone. **WE WILL ORDER THE POINSETTIA PLANTS.** The deadline for ordering is December 15th.

The plants will be in the sanctuary for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. You may pick up your poinsettia any time after that—we urge you to pick up your plant no later than January 6.

Plants will have 4-6 blooms and will cost \$10.00.

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

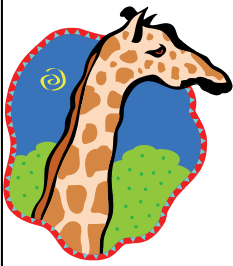
\_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Grace Lutheran Church and return to the church office.

### **Batik, a Symbol of Partnership**



Please note the wall hanging located in the narthex. This was a gift to our Shetek Conference and Southwest Minnesota Synod, ELCA by the Ondini Circuit of Evangelical Lutheran Church Southern Africa. Our Shetek conference is in partnership with the Ondini Circuit, who have twelve parishes served mostly by lay evangelists and four ordained pastors.

Our working relationship with the Ondini Circuit has been based on three projects: building community gardens, learning opportunities (youth programs, food preservation workshops, meeting with HIV/AIDS committees, and lay preachers workshops) and Relationship building.

So far we have had three delegations of members of our Shetek Conference visit leaders and members of the Ondini Circuit in South Africa. Funding of these trips has come from grants, gifts, and the participants themselves as well. Approximately two dozen of the members of our Shetek Conference have been included in these delegations, including former interim Pastor, Nita Harberts.

This batik (wall hanging) was presented to the 2011 delegation by the leader of the Ondini Circuit as a symbol of our partnership – two giraffes with necks crossed. This was framed by a member of Grace Lutheran, rural Worthington. This batik will remain at Grace for a time and then will travel to another church in our conference for display.

## **Charitable Giving Forum: Questions and Answers**

Join us in the Fellowship room at 9:30 AM, December 4th, to explore the possibilities of sharing charitably with Grace. Damon Eisma will lead this meeting sharing information regarding charitable giving before or after death. Bring your own questions as we are planning mainly a question and answer session. This forum is sponsored by Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Program, a financial program set up to serve Grace Lutheran, it's members and others in need.



## December Birthdays



- Dec 1: Larry Overgaard
- Dec 2: Travis Adams
- Dec 3: Brad Ahrendt, Angie Beyenhof, John Tofteland
- Dec 4: Madeleine Schmuck
- Dec 5: Stan Gyberg, Kim Schmidt, Julie Tofteland
- Dec 6: Trevor Johnson, Glenda Schneekloth, Rachel Tofteland, Matt Wagner
- Dec 9: Andrew DeBoer, Diane Holmberg
- Dec 10: Dan Kopp, Mark Lundgren
- Dec 11: Becky Gonnerman, Paige Sandbulte
- Dec 12: Gannon Ahrendt, Camron Kopp, Nancy Overgaard, Tom Rolfs
- Dec 13: Delmar DeVries, Devin Richters, Dan Wendland
- Dec 14: Spencer Schacht, Bob Steensma, Cole Walgrave
- Dec 15: Karen Radisewitz, mark Schneekloth
- Dec 16: Lyle Anderson
- Dec 17: Cheyanne Bolluty, Ardell Bowman, Brad Goembel, Dennis Gyberg, Lori Mead, Scott Nelson
- Dec 18: Joan Amos
- Dec 19: Brittany Nichols, Nikki Verba, Maggie Schmidt
- Dec 20: Kristin Rud
- Dec 21: Beth Bartels, Hannah Kanninen
- Dec 22: Joelle Newport
- Dec 24: Randy Kephart, Nick Meyer
- Dec 26: Emily Wendland
- Dec 27: Karsun Newport, Dan Petersen
- Dec 28: Warren Herreid, Jada Hoven
- Dec 29: Matthew Wieneke
- Dec 30: Ron Mulder



## Pastoral Acts

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Funerals</b> | 11/7 Ellen Aanenson |
| <b>Baptisms</b> | 11/26 Zane Verba    |
|                 | DOB 4/7/06          |
|                 | 11/26 Macoy Verba   |
|                 | DOB 10/19/11        |

## December Radio Sponsors

- Dec 4: In memory of Herman & Louise Pierson  
from Jim & Ellen Cinkle
- Dec 11: In memory of brother, Rev. David  
Jacobson, from Arla Bakken, family &  
Friends
- Dec 18: In memory of Emily Matthiesen from  
Lyle, Jed & Elaine
- Dec 25: In memory of Almer Wallem and Rachel  
Untiedt from Mark & Arlette



# December 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> 8:30 Missions in Action 1:30 Endowment 4:30 Book Study	<i>2</i> 3:00 Telecast Ch. 3 (Knology)	<i>3</i> 5:30 Worship/ Holy Communion
<i>4</i> 8:15 Wor/Comm 9:15 Coffee 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Charitable Giving Forum 10:45 Wor/Comm  4:00 Ride & Dine	<i>5</i> 9:00 Bible Study 10 & 4 Telecast Ch. 3 (Knology) 7:40 Echoes	<i>6</i> 9:00 Staff Meeting 9:00 GLCW Ex Bd	<i>7</i> 7:00 Men's Study 3:15 WINGS 6:15 Wor/Comm 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Conf. Gr 6-9	<i>8</i> 2:00 GLCW Christmas Tea 4:30 Book Study 7:00 Exaltation Worship Team	<i>9</i> 3:00 Telecast	<i>10</i> 5:30 Worship/
<i>11</i> 8:15 Worship 9:15 Coffee 9:30 SS & Adult Sty 10:45 Worship  4:00 Sunday School Christmas Program	<i>12</i> 9:00 Bible Study 10 & 4 Telecast Ch. 3 (Knology) 6:30 Vibes 7:40 Echoes	<i>13</i> 9:00 Staff Meeting  6:45 Parish Planning Council 8:00 Ministries	<i>14</i> 7:00 Men's Study 3:15 WINGS 6:15 Wor 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Conf. Gr 6-9 8:15 Bread of Life Worship Team	<i>15</i> 4:30 Book Study	<i>16</i> 3:00 Telecast	<i>17</i> 5:30 Worship/ Holy Communion
<i>18</i> 8:15 Wor/Comm 9:15 Coffee 9:30 SS & Adult Sty 10:45 Wor/Comm  5:15 St. Francis House, S Falls	<i>19</i> GRACE NOTES DEADLINE 9:00 Bible Study 10 & 4 Telecast Ch. 3 (Knology) 7:40 Echoes	<i>20</i> 9:00 Staff Meeting	<i>21</i> 7:00 Men's Study 3:15 WINGS 6:15 Wor/Comm 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Conf. Gr 6-9	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> 3:00 Telecast	<i>24</i> <b>Christmas Eve</b> 3:00 Worship 5:00 Prelude 5:30 Candle Light Worship
<i>25</i> <b>Christmas Day</b> 8:15 KQAD— Pre-recorded 10:00 Worship	<i>26</i> Office Closed	<i>27</i> CIRCLES 9:00 Staff Meeting 1:30 MJB Comm 2:30 Pop Cr Comm 3:30 Vets Comm	<i>28</i> 7:00 Men's Study 8:15 Caring Ministers 6:15 Worship	<i>29</i> 8:30 Missions in Action 9:00 Assemble GRACE NOTES	<i>30</i> 3:00 Telecast	<i>31</i> 5:30 Wor/Comm

# Children and Family Ministries

## WINGS



### Vertical Limit

Dec 7- Joseph becomes a ruler of Egypt  
Dec 14 – The parable of the three servants  
Dec 21 – Paul presses on the goal  
NO WINGS Dec 28  
NO WINGS Jan 4

**December 21<sup>st</sup>** – Bring an adult with you to WINGS and make a salt dough Ornament for your Christmas Tree. Adults need to arrive at 3:20 (You can meet your child at the church or walk them from school)

**Thank our wonderful volunteers for Making WINGS a success.**

*We would love extra help getting snacks prepared, served, and purchased.*

Contact Amie Reker  
[amiereker@yahoo.com](mailto:amiereker@yahoo.com)  
or leave a message in the office

## CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

YOU MAY CHECK OUT BOOKS, DVD'S, AND MUSIC IN THE NEW CHILDREN'S LIBRARY LOCATED ON THE 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR PLEASE FOLLOW THE SELF CHECK-OUT SHEET LOCATED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE LIBRARY

## November

### Sunday School Offering

\$60 Sponsor a Child in Guatemala  
GRACE: \$82.67  
Food Shelf \$27.55  
Share \$27.55  
Backpack Program \$27.55



## Anticipating Christmas

### Introduce your Children to Advent

*Advent last four weeks and this year began on Nov 27<sup>th</sup>.*

*Advent is a great time to share family traditions and conversation about faith.*

**Interact with the Nativity figures-** To help your kids understand the "waiting for the savior" message of Advent, brings out a new part of the set – animals, shepherds, angels, and finally, baby Jesus – weekly. Or, to symbolize the journey to Bethlehem and Christmas, set the figures across the room from the manger and move them all just a little bit closer each day. Some Advent calendars promote the same kind of interaction by having kids take a new figure out of the pocket for each day leading up to Jesus birth and placing that figure into the scene.

**Point out the symbols of the season.** When you see an Advent or Christmas wreath, note how it's a circle and how that symbolizes God's never-ending love. As you bake cookies, use a star-shaped cutter to illustrate the story of the Christmas start. If you use an angel on your tree, tal about how the angel Gabriel visited Mary – and perhaps even read that story from the Bible to your kids. "Just think about how you can intentionally add Christ into your celebrations."

## Sunday School

Dec 4<sup>th</sup> – Program Practice 9:30-10:30

Age 3 – Kind: ½ practice, ½ class

1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade: Full practice

Dec 11<sup>th</sup> – Program Practice 9:30-10:30



## ABC'S OF CHRISTMAS

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

**DEC 11<sup>th</sup> 4:00**

*Following the program*

*6<sup>th</sup>-12 grade will have cookies for sale*

Dec 18<sup>th</sup> – Lesson on Christmas Story

Dec 25 No Sunday School

Jan 1 No Sunday School



## Next Generation Ministries

### Special Dates to Remember:

- Friday  
December 2, Winterfest Party!  
7:30 @ the Church
- Sunday,  
December 11,  
Christmas Cookie Sale
- Wednesday,  
December 14, Youth  
Worship Service  
6:15 PM

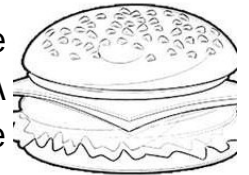
**JESUS is the reason for the Season! Merry Christmas!**



**1 Timothy 5: 12-13** *“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”*

### Confirmation Suppers In Need of Volunteers

Most of the dates after Christmas are still wide open. Please Sign up at the church to help. A simple meal is all it takes, you don’t need to be Chef Boyardee!!



### Winterfest Christmas party!

It’s that time of year again where us crazy Minnesotans celebrate how cold it is outside! We are planning to kick off winterfest as a youth group on Friday, December 2 at 7:30 PM. We will have a movie and some snacks at the church to bring in the Holiday spirit! Expect to be done around 10:00. Let Dustin know if you are planning to attend and bring friends!

### Christmas Cookie Sales!

The Annual Christmas cookie sale will be taking place Sunday December 11. Each confirmation *family* is expected to bring 8 dozen cookies to sell that Sunday. Cookies will be sold between worship services, after second service, and also at the children’s Christmas Program that evening. Let’s get our bake on!



### Youth Worship Service

The youth (6-12th grade) are going to put on a Worship Service on Wednesday, Dec 14 at the 6:15 Service. Let Dustin Know if you are interested in being a part of that!

**PRAY  
UNTIL SOMETHING  
HAPPENS**

**Matthew 1: 23** — The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel— which means “God with us”.

## Missionary News

Dear friends,

Christmas changes things...When ordinary (and terrified) shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger in a stable ... they became extraordinary missionaries of the Good News. According to Luke 2:8-20: "When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them."

There were similar emotions of doubt and excitement among 60 seminary students at a recent workshop entitled "Christian Education for Mission" held at the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI) in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. (The ELCA supports theological education at LTI and scholarships for graduate students in theology at the University of KwaZulu/Natal.)

I was invited by the seminary to lead the workshop which took place at the end of the school year just before students returned to their homes for the Christmas summer break.

We started by talking in small groups about our personal experiences of Christian education as children, youth and adults. The reports were both negative and positive. Then, working in groups, the students prepared and presented lessons for Sunday School and Confirmation based on the new Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) Christian education resource books "Living Together in Christ." ([www.lucsa.org](http://www.lucsa.org)) The lessons were lively as was the critique in plenary.

What really got the students excited and talking was the discovery that the Triune God is a Missionary God revealed in the way of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection and that it is not a plane ticket but our baptism that affirms that we are all, by God's grace, claimed, gathered and sent to participate in God's mission for the sake of the life of the world.

Some students did a role play at the end of the workshop to demonstrate what they will be saying when they return to their communities and home congregations over Christmas.

They responded to the question "What did you learn?" saying:

*"I learned that we are all missionaries through baptism and that we are all learners and teachers. I learned that mission is the work of the Triune God. I learned how to be a missionary in the mission of the Triune God. I learned about the three dimensions of mission: transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. I learned what I did not know, that we are all missionaries and do not need to wait for missionaries from outside Africa. I learned that mission needs participants not spectators. I learned that Christian education is for the whole church and the way of evangelism."*

Christmas and the Good News of "Immanuel" - God in, with and for the life of the world - does change things.

Thank you for your participation in the mission of the Triune God locally and globally.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Knutson

ELCA - Global Mission

Regional Program Assistant – Southern Africa

Cape Town, November 2, 2011

[www.southernafricaconnections.org](http://www.southernafricaconnections.org)