

# The Nugget

For January 2010

A monthly newsletter from St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Auburn, California

## January Message from Reverend Susan

Greetings,

January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany, the visit of the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. Their story lives on through the ages, in literature, music, drama, poetry—how they were pulled by a star and an inward knowing on a long journey to a life changing, world changing experience as they knelt in the presence of that most holy baby. Their story can live on in us during this January time as we allow the light of Christ lead us step by faithful step. We will have one of several opportunities this year, I hope, to gather as a congregation on Saturday, January 30, 2010 for our Annual Meeting. Keep reading now! Don't automatically think "another boring meeting" and put this down! Last year we were quite successful in getting through the necessary but dry business quickly with an equal amount of time left over for some lively small group work. The outcome of that work has helped us immensely this past year in many diverse ways! This year's meeting time should be equally if not more worthwhile. We're still putting the agenda together, but the conversation part will most likely focus around the energy that is bubbling up around achieving more visibility and presence of St. Luke's in our community and the spiritual needs of our own congregation. We'll have coffee and goodies as we gather at 9:30 a.m. The meeting itself will begin at 10 a.m. and adjourned by noon.

One item of business to be accomplished is the election of vestry members. We have four positions open this year and we have two vestry nominees to announce at this time; Molly Hance and B.V. Rao. This will be a challenging, yet exciting year to serve in leadership. If God is nudging or perhaps even shoving you in that direction, or if you have someone to suggest, please speak to me or a vestry member; Beth McMurtrie, Jim Webb, Bruce Choate, John Barnsdale, Meredith Guy, Carolyn Richardson, Bruce Anderson, John Leininger and Molly Hance.

My closing is an Epiphany prayer written by priest, author and friend, Susan Bock. It would make a simple January discipline for each of us to pray each day. Shall we try it? "Shine, O God, as the Light that creates, the Light that calls, the Light that comes again with every dawn. Shine as the Light that scatters every shadow, and the Light in which we promise to walk, with your help. Amen.

Epiphany blessings,

Rev. Susan

# DECEMBER 15, 2009 ST. LUKES' VESTRY MEETING

Meeting was opened at 6:00 with a prayer by Rev. Susan.

Present: Rev. Susan, John Leininger, Jack Buffington, Beth McMurtrie, Jim Webb, Carolyn Richardson, Molly Hance, Meredith Guy, Marge Hier, Bruce Anderson.

Absent: John Barnsdale, Bruce Choate.

First item for discussion was the broken stained glass window on the street side of the Parish Hall. John Leininger will take put plywood up tomorrow to prevent further breakage and provide weather protection. Rev. Susan will contact the insurance company to report the damage. Further action to be undertaken after contact with the insurance company.

Minutes from November meeting MSP

Agenda Approved

Treasurers Report: Basic report and financial picture is on track for us to meet the budget for 2009. We should end the year with NO EXCESS but balanced.

Discussion on the Budget for 2010: The Vestry thanks all who did such a good job in contacting our congregation about Giving with Gratitude for 2010. Jack B. prepared a very comprehensive overview of the income and outgo for the past year, and the probable financial needs for the coming year. We have lost 15 pledging units this past year, but those who have pledged for the coming year have been able to make our budget for the coming year be workable and balanced. There was discussion with each member asking questions and expressing their concerns about the budget. The Treasurer will present these ideas to the Finance Committee and will bring the final proposed budget to the January Vestry meeting for approval. The budget will be a part of the annual report.

Rev. Susan's Contract was amended to include the housing allowance and a copy of this agreement is attached. This agreement was signed by the clerk, and will be sent to the IRS as required.

SR. WARDEN'S REPORT: We need to find at least 3 people who are ready to serve on the Vestry. Any one who is interested in learning about this should contact any Vestry member or Rev. Susan. The Vestry meets once a month, works on the business of keeping the parish vital and growing and is a great way to learn more about St. Luke's and The Episcopal Tradition of Service.

Employee Contracts have been returned after self review by the recipients. They will be copied and given back to each employee. Rev. Susan will talk with Bruce Choate who had concerns about the Nursery Care.

Annual Meeting will be Saturday January 30. A simple brunch will be served. ALL VESTRY MEMBERS need to have their annual report in to the office by the first week in January so that they are included in the annual report.

Rev. Susan would like to show a Motivational Video at the meeting. The Vestry would like

to preview the video at the next meeting so that they are able to meet with small groups to discuss it at the Annual Meeting.

Mutual Ministry meeting was discussed and the Vestry members who attended felt that it was a beneficial meeting. Bruce A. would like us to make goals for each Vestry meeting and include them in the agenda.

JR.WARDEN: No changes in the Parish Calendar. Let Jim know of any upcoming events so that he can keep the Calendar up to date.

Jim commented on the success of the Canvas and the hard work of the Finance Comm.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: John L. has checked with the city and there is no problem removing the trees near the Victorian Attic which have grown around the power lines. They will be removed when possible. John will have a Nugget article with more explanation. The leak in the roof of the Parish Hall has been repaired. The Episcopal Church sign will be mounted at a future date.

WORSHIP: No report

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Episcopal Experience will restart in the spring.

HOSPITALITY: Meredith will meet with the clerk after the holidays. They will work on identification of those people who still need to be photographed for inclusion in the new photo directory.

EVANGELISM: Carolyn reported that the City of Auburn is unable to give her the assurance that we will be able to hang a banner across the High Street intersection advertising the Pancake Fest. She will order the banner and we will put the banner up in the best location possible. She will see that there is publicity in the newspaper, but will not be able to oversee any other parts of the Fest. WE NEED SOME ONE TO OVERSEE AND COORDINATE THE FEST. Contact any Vestry member or Rev. Susan to be a part of this Long Standing Tradition at St. Luke's.

OUTREACH: John L. reported that Stuff a Bus was successful. The Auburn Christmas Barrel pickup occurred and St. Luke's donations were the largest of any that had been picked up. KUDOS TO THE CONGREGATION!

RECTORS REPORT: Rev. Susan's Ministry reports for Oct. and Nov. were reviewed. The Congregation Leadership Conference will be at St. John's Roseville, 2/20/10. Child care concerns were handled and the family contacted and pleased.

A Polynesian Cultural Work Shop and Dancing group will be using

Incarnation Congregation will be hosting a free Community Christmas Dinner in the Parish Hall on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> before the 6:00 service.

AA will also have their regular meeting on that evening. There will probably be some parking problems for people attending either the dinner, AA or the 6:00 service.

Marge Hier, Clerk

# STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Based on the economic conditions we faced the first of this year of losing 24 family units (a total of 37 people); having to let go of our office secretary; reducing our Rector's salary 10%; cutting back on many other needed items and entering the year with a deficit, caused St. Luke's to be in a real crisis. However, with good financial management we survived 2009.

Our pledge drive began with an every member canvass and the Stewardship Committee started contacting people in November. To those people who pledged and/or donated for 2010, we sincerely want to thank you for making this a successful pledge drive. The good news is we will not begin 2010 with a deficit situation. Rev. Susan is now able to return to her regular salary; however, we are not out of the woods yet. We have to continue to watch spending and entertain new sources of income for St. Luke's for the coming year.

Thanks again to the members of St. Luke's for your pledges and/or donations and to those who participated in the Stewardship Drive.

Jim Webb, Chairman of the Stewardship Committee

## **“REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS.”—Philippians 4**

Happy Epiphany to you, from the Sunday school! Epiphany is the season of “seeing and knowing”—we remember the wise men's seeing the babe in the manger, after their twelve-day star-guided journey, and knowing that this was the long-awaited messiah. (In spite of our cultural tendencies to have Christmas be “over” on December 26th (or by New Year's Day, at the latest!), Christmas really doesn't end until the day of (the) Epiphany, January 6.)

Reflecting on thoughts of Epiphany, I realized that my personal Christian journey has not really had “one sudden revelation” or epiphany, rather, it's been a long series of small, questioning, at-times hesitant steps towards salvation, and being the kind of person I think God wants me to be. I claim this to be one reason that I was so late in coming to the Lord—I waited and waited for a “big” sign, and finally realized, after a long discussion with my rector, that I didn't need to wait for the big sign—I just needed to take a small step, on faith, and God would meet me there. And He did, and He continues to give me small, glimmering “mini-epiphanies” (if you'll pardon the oxymoron!). I'll share the catalyst for one recent one with you, written anonymously in Forward Day By Day:

Rejoice in the Lord always. Really? Always? But Lord . . .

“Yes, always. I've noticed that you're joyful enough when the flowers bloom and the balmy breezes blow. But why no joy when you lost your job, when your wife left you, when you had to take a second mortgage on your home? Maybe you thought I'd left you then, that I am with you only amidst the flower blossoms and the warm breezes. But

when Paul wrote about rejoicing in me always, he was chained in a prison cell. He rejoiced even there. Paul knew that I lay next to him on that cold stone floor while the mice and roaches crawled over him. He rejoiced not because happy things were happening (they weren't), but because he knew I loved him. And I love you, too. In fact, I am closest to you when you are most debilitated, fearful, despondent, and helpless. It is then that I hold you most closely to my heart.

“Feel my arms around you. After crucifixion comes resurrection. So it was with me and so it will be with you, for I am with you and you are mine. I claim you for my own. I love you and I always will, come what may. Rejoice in me. Always.”

In a recent discussion in the Youth Class of Sunday school, we talked about the difference between happiness and joy. The students amazed me (they usually do, in some way, each class!) by their mature understanding of those two things—that one can be unhappy, based on present circumstances, and still be joyful, secure in the knowledge that God loves us, and “after crucifixion comes resurrection.”

I see now I need to change the greeting at the beginning of this article: While we wish you a happy Epiphany season, we pray that you have a joyful one!!

Toney Gausewitz,

Sunday school superintendent

## **Lay Eucharistic Visitors Needed To “Bring the Church Home”**

We are still need people to serve as 'Eucharistic Visitors' to perform that very special ministry, of keeping people not able to attend services, connected in a very real way with us, through the Eucharist. With the number of homebound members increasing, St. Luke's is in need of more people for this ministry. This involves a monthly visit to person's homes (on your schedule), sharing a short service of Scripture, Meditation and Communion. If you're interested in this special ministry, or if you know of someone to whom we could minister in this way, please stop by and see us at our display during the January 30 Ministry Fair, or contact Bruce Anderson, LEV Coordinator 530-878-4941 (BroBrooz@sbcglobal.net)

Thanks,

Bruce