



# ***The Messenger***

*News about our church,  
our ministries and our people*

**April 2013**

**Living Waters Lutheran Church and Preschool**

## **About This Issue...**

This issue contains lots of information you need to know. Be sure to read the article by Pastor Dell on Page 4. It is about the present and future of our ELCA churches.

The next issue of The Messenger will appear in May and will be a combined May-June issue. Deadline for articles is May 21. See last page for details.

Thanks,  
Judy Johnson,  
Editor and Publisher

## **Preschool Open House**

Our Preschool will be hosting an open house on Saturday, April 27, from 10:00—12:00 Noon. Children between the ages of 2-5 are welcome. We also offer free VPK. If you know a child who could benefit from a Christian education experience, please let their parents know about this great opportunity. The children receive lots of personal attention. The Preschool also offers a school readiness program.



The youth would like to thank the congregation for all their support during the last year. Your support has enabled the youth to experience fellowship together through local outings such as bowling, putt-putt, and lock-ins, as well as trips taken to Holy Land.

This would not have been possible without your support, and we want to thank each of you, God Bless!

The Youth and Their Leaders

## **Viva Italia Night - April 27**

By Gayle Backiel and Sheri Moehling

WELCA (The Women of Living Waters ELCA) is hosting a spaghetti dinner with all the trimmings on Saturday, April 27, in Hanson Hall at 6:00. This will be a fundraiser and a gathering for the end of season.

Profits will benefit the ministries of the women and small group programs. We will be selling tickets in the Narthex for the next three Sundays. Tickets for \$10 will include spaghetti and meatball dinner (sauce by Rick) along with salad, garlic bread and drinks.

Please consider helping by setting up for the dinner, serving, helping in the kitchen, or cleaning up after the dinner. A sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex. Come join us to support the ladies and say farewell for a while to our seasonal members.

## A Message From the Pastor



“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Ephesians 4:1)

What is it like to be “a prisoner for the Lord”? Is this drudgery? Is this why some Christians seem so unhappy? Does this explain our insistence that it costs something to be a Christian?

I don’t think so.

To be a “prisoner of the Lord” is to be captive to the love and peace of God that comes to us in the crucified and risen Jesus. It is to be free of the shackles of sin and guilt so we can truly and joyfully love God and others. It is to hear God calling us to come home where we belong. It is to leave “have to” behind and to be compelled by “want to.”

At Living Waters, we have a simple tool that helps us focus on living “a life worthy of the calling” we have received as those who belong to and follow the risen Lord Jesus. It is something we refer to as the Seven Marks of Discipleship, summed up by the consonants in the acrostic, “PoWeR SuRGeS.”

If you want to be a Christian, ask God to forgive you for the sake of your Savior, the crucified Jesus.

If you want to live as a Christian, invite the Lord, the risen Jesus, to come into your heart. Give your life to Jesus. Let the Holy Spirit guide and empower you to live the kind of life Jesus calls you to live, the life worthy of your calling as a Christian. *Pastor Dell*

### “I Want To Grow As I Follow Jesus”

#### My Prayer

Dear God, Help me grow in my discipleship. Give me PoWeR for my life. Help me SuRGe ahead as I follow you with my church family at Living Waters. Amen.

#### My Pledge

To grown in my discipleship, I acknowledge the following:

#### “Seven Marks of One Who Follows Jesus”

PoWeR	SuRGeS
Pray every day	Serve in ministry
Worship every week	Relate to others in a small group
Read the Bible every day	Give A Tithe
	Share my faith

## Council Highlights

By Scott Hanson, Council President

Your church council met for its regular March meeting with a full agenda. We invited Michele Hilton and Nancy Taylor from the Mid Gulf Conference of the Florida Bahamas Synod to provide an update on the activities of the conference and synod. A new Bishop will be elected at the Synod Assembly in May. They invited all to participate in this very important event.

With the conference theme of "Do God's Work, with Our Hands-together", we discussed a variety of programs and thoughts that could enhance Living Waters. Already, we have begun to look at these ideas.

The council is working on improving communication, conversation and dialogue throughout all of the different groups, committees and special interest areas. With all of the increased activities, new members and additional small groups, a common calendar of events is being created. It is suggested that the congregation check our website calendar for up-to-date information.

Every month we are seeing an incredible increase of involvement in the ministries of Living Waters Lutheran. If you haven't had a chance to "get involved", please consider sharing your special talents and interests.

We're STRETCHING" and Growing in our commitment to Sharing Christ in Word and Deed!

## Preschool News

By Susan D'Amico, Director

We are starting April with 17 VPK students and 10 children in the 2/3 year old classroom. We were able to make our minimum order for the Little Caesars Fundraiser! Thank you to the congregation! We could not have done it without you! We will be using the \$200 raised to purchase a message board for the outside of the preschool.

We will be having an open house on April 27 for anyone looking for a preschool for their child.

We have been teaching the children about the true meaning of Easter and ending with an Easter party.

I would like to welcome Gail Serianni to the Preschool! She has finished her classes and will be training with Kelli to take over the 2/3 year old class in the Fall. She has previously been our substitute teacher.

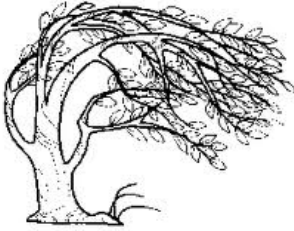


### From the Mouths of Children

Our sanctuary will be filled with the lovely sounds of children singing on Sunday, April 21. Our Preschool children will provide Special Music at the 10:00 service on that day. Please be sure to attend and give them a warm welcome.

# What Is Blowing In The Wind?

## A Report from Pastor Dell Shiell



We speak of the Holy Spirit with different word pictures. One such image is “fire.” The Holy Spirit illuminates our path and guides us in our walk with the Lord Jesus.

We use another word picture for the Holy Spirit, “wind.” The Holy Spirit blows this way and that. Like the wind, we don’t see the Spirit of God, but we can feel the wind and see it stirring things up. So, what is blowing in the wind now?

Recently, I heard an assistant to Bishop Benoway say that for a church to afford a fulltime pastor a church needs an average worship attendance of at least 150 per Sunday and no debt. This simple observation struck a nerve for me. A couple of weeks later, I sent an email to the Bishop and others. It hit me—Living Waters cannot afford a fulltime pastor—and the reason is obvious—our average worship attendance is 125 and we have \$295,000 of debt.

In my email to Bishop Benoway, I pointed out that Living Waters is one of five struggling ELCA congregations within a 15 mile radius, all of which cannot afford a fulltime pastor and three of which are currently without a called pastor. I simply mentioned this to the bishop and asked if the time is ripe for someone to start a discussion among the area ELCA churches about the future.

The next day the bishop replied and suggested an initial meeting of seven congregations.

Among them are five struggling congregations: Our Savior (Nokomis), Christ (Englewood), Faith (Rotonda West), Hope (Gulf Cove) and Living Waters (North Port). In addition, the bishop thought we should invite two larger congregations into the discussion: Emmanuel (Venice) and Holy Trinity (Port Charlotte).

On March 8, three members of the Living Waters Long Range Planning Committee attended this special meeting convened by Bishop Benoway at Hope Lutheran in Gulf Cove. By the end of this initial meeting, it was decided to arrange for a subsequent meeting sometime in April. It was also decided to bring in an outside consultant to lead this follow-up meeting.

At this point in time, no one has any idea where this will lead, if indeed it leads anywhere. But, for now, it sure feels like God is stirring things up a little. We will keep you posted as to whether or not the discussion about Collaborative Ministry continues or fizzles. One thing is certain: we at Living Waters can take courage from the realization that we are not alone. We have four sister congregations nearby that cannot afford a full-time pastor either. We, also, have two sister congregations that can afford a full-time pastor and indicate some concern about our welfare as their neighbor.

It is always comforting to know we are not alone. Don’t you agree?

**April 14**  
**A Special Appeal for**  
***A Special Time***

By Carol Sutton



**A SPECIAL TIME**

**Alzheimer's Respite Program**  
**Sharing. Caring. Celebrating.**

A Special Time is a non-profit, nondenominational social adult respite program which meets every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. right here at church. We offer emotional support and structured activities for individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia or other cognitive disabilities, plus much needed relief for caregivers.

In order to continue our work and better serve A Special Time and our community, we plan to have a special offering during church services on Sunday, April 14.

You may not know that our program is an ecumenical venture involving a total of five churches in North Port: Trinity United Methodist, North Port Community Church of Christ,

St. Nathaniel's Episcopal, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and our own church. The Ladies Auxiliary of AMVETS Post 2000 is also very active in A Special Time. These organizations provide volunteers every Friday and will also be participating in this fundraiser.

We are asking that you consider making a commitment to support A Special Time by making a donation. We will provide a donor envelope on the Sunday of the special offering. There will be a space for you to enter your church envelope number so you can get credit for your donation. Checks can be made out to "A Special Time." Every donation makes a difference.

Thank you for your continued support.

## **Mission and Vision at Living Waters**

By David Lanning

The Long Range Planning Committee is emphasizing a Congregation-wide review of the Mission and Vision of Living Waters. This review is a starting point for establishing a strategic plan.

To begin the process, we met with the Board of Programs to review the present statements and to initiate thinking about them.

A mission statement is a brief description of our fundamental purpose. It answers the question: "Why do we exist?" A vision statement focuses on our future. "What kind of a church do we want to become?" These

statements should be brief and memorable. They should roll off the tongues of members easily and our belief and practice of these statements should be evident to all who enter our doors.

**Our current mission statement is:**  
**Sharing Christ in word and deed. Our current vision statement is: Sharing God's love in word and deed by praising God and serving the community.**

Please give our mission and vision statements your prayerful consideration. You can send me your thoughts at: davidlanning1@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Remembering Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, was born in 1906 and died on April 9, 1945. At the age of 25, he became a lecturer in theology at the University of Berlin. With Hitler's rise to power, he became a leading spokesperson for the resistance movement against the Nazis. He was arrested in 1943 and sent to Schönberg prison for being linked to a failed attempt on Hitler's life. After leading a worship service at the prison on April 8, 1945, he was taken away to be hanged the next day. His last words were: "This is the end, but for me the beginning of life."

## Food for Thought from Martin Luther

- "Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us."
- "Anyone who is to find Christ must first find the church. How could anyone know where Christ is and what faith is in him unless he knew where his believers are?"



## May Service Schedule

Reminder: Beginning on May 5,  
we go to one service,  
held at 10:00.

## A Report on Living Waters Preschool

By David Lanning

The Living Waters Preschool is owned and operated by Living Waters Lutheran Church. It has a budget that is separate from the Church budget, a Board of Directors and paid staff. The President of the Board is also a member of the Church Council.

The philosophy of the Preschool Program stems from the belief that every child is a gift from God. Since God entrusts the care of these children to parents, the church is offering this program to assist parents in their child's care. Especially, it is designed to help in development of their special gifts. This includes their intellectual, emotional and spiritual resources. Their activities have been planned and prepared to educate them spiritually, intellectually,

physically, emotionally and socially.

During the past year there has been an average of 30 children in the Preschool. This is combination of 3 year olds and older children who are under the VPK program. VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) funding is State funded as arranged through Charlotte County.

Last year the total expenses were about \$86,000 and the total income was about \$104,000. The expenses included \$4,800 in a contribution to Church to cover rent. In addition to the rent, the Preschool has also been giving contributions to the church to repay the \$50,000 extra initial costs; repayments now total more than \$30,000.

The Preschool is doing very well due to the fine work of those involved and especially the dedication of the teachers and the Director, Susan D'Amico.

## April Sunday Servants

Please check the schedule to verify the days you will be a Sunday Servant. If there is a blank space, please consider signing up to help out. The sign-up book is located on the table in the Narthex. **Without you, something is missing.**

Function	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28	
<b>Ushers</b>					
8:15	L. Wegener	L. Wegener	L. Wegener	L. Wegener	
	J. Wegener	J. Wegener	J. Wegener	J. Wegener	
10:00				B. Love	
<b>Altar Guild</b>					
(both)	C. Cortese	C. Cortese	C. Cortese	C. Cortese	
<b>Counters</b>					
(both)	A. Banks	K. Grant	L. Ertle	B. Cartwright	
	J. Parcels	M. Savard	M. Savard	J. Pauley	
<b>Lay Reader</b>					
8:15	J. Johnson	V. Biassi			
10:00	B. Bruno	G. Backiel	P. Keller	J. Love	
<b>Comm. Assist.</b>					
8:15					
10:00		P. Keller			
<b>Greeter</b>					
8:15	J. Christen	J. Christen	J. Christen	J. Christen	
10:00	C. Dhom	B. Carlock	M. Poe		
	D. Dhom		D. Poe		
<b>Fellowship</b>					
8:15 set up					
10:00 clean up					
<b>Nursery</b>					
8:15	G. Backiel	J. Christen			
10:00	B. Dreschel				
<b>PowerPoint</b>					
8:15	M. Savard	D. Mendez	C. Lundquist	D. Lanning	
10:00	N. Van Harn	K. Bridegam	A. Banks	L. Shelton	

## On a personal note...

*Happy Birthday!*

Happy April Birthday To These Members

If your name has been omitted from this list or the date is in error, please contact the church office to make the correction.

April 1: Laela Gullickson  
April 2: Norma Van Harn  
April 4: Susan Freese and James Godshall  
April 6: Dakota Buck  
April 9: William Hanson and Mary Wagner  
April 11: Paul Cartwright  
April 12: Rita Norton and Joel Hoeppner  
April 16: Barb Cartwright  
April 18: George Dwyer  
April 20: Jake Mendez and Gayle Backiel  
April 21: Caleb Hess  
April 24: Marty Savard  
April 28: Rhyder Kolb

## Adult Bible Study Resumes in May

Our popular Adult Bible study resumes on Sunday, May 5 at 9:00am. During our summer schedule we move this great experience from Monday evenings to Sunday mornings.

## Thanks to the Choir

By Judy Johnson

I would like to thank the choir members for their contributions to our worship during the season. Many of our members either have already departed for their northern homes or will soon. Committing to a weekly rehearsal requires a dedication to God and to church. The beautiful sounds and sentiments expressed in the music have been a terrific way to glorify our Father.

## Second Sunday Hymn Sing

Our next hymn sing is April 14. The singing begins 10 minutes before each service. Be ready to request your favorite song from the red hymnal.

**The Messenger** is published monthly by Living Waters Lutheran Church with printed copies distributed the first Sunday of each month. Copies are also available at: [www.livingwaterslutheran.com](http://www.livingwaterslutheran.com) and via email distribution.

To have information included in the newsletter, please write your content and send it to Judy Johnson: [j3john@comcast.net](mailto:j3john@comcast.net). Articles must be submitted by the 21st of each month for publication the following month and may be edited. Pictures are not printed.

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**Office Hours: 9:00am-Noon, Mon. - Thurs.**

If you have questions about our church, its ministries or about becoming a member, please contact Pastor Dell Shiell via email at: [pastor@livingwaterslutheran.com](mailto:pastor@livingwaterslutheran.com)