

The Bell



The monthly newsletter of The Community Church of Issaquah January 2012

“If Every Day Could be Christmas”

“But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

Luke 2:19

Have you ever had such a nice Christmas that you said or thought to yourself, “I wish every day could be Christmas!?” I hope your Christmas was that good for you this year! But let’s consider, isn’t there something of Christmas that we *can* take with us into the rest of the year to lend it some of the beauty that so many of us feel on Christmas Day?

If we don’t take something of Christmas with us, the time after Christmas can be somewhat of a “down time.” No family visits to look forward to. No excited children talking about Santa and the brightly-colored packages under the tree. No Christmas Carols or festively-decorated sanctuary. What about the time after the first Christmas when the excitement had died down; when Joseph had to make his way back to his carpentry; when for Mary there was all the work of caring for an infant; when the shepherds went back to their flocks; when the angels finished their singing, and the star disappeared from the sky, what then? There came a time when those participants in the world’s greatest drama had to go back from Bethlehem into the normal workaday world just like we do.

Even though we all have to take the road back from “Bethlehem” to our daily worlds, we need to understand that we have a choice in how we travel that road back. We can travel in the manner of the cynic, believing that the events of Christmas are an unreal fantasy which brings fun for a season, but has no place in the real world of “every person for himself” and personal isolation. Or we can travel back, taking something of Christmas with us to make our experiences in our world richer.

The good news of great joy for us is that God did not retreat to a far corner of heaven after the first Christmas, and neither is God going to do so this Christmas. God came to earth in the person of the Babe of Bethlehem not as a one-time event, but that we might always know of God’s nearness and willingness to participate in a very intimate way in our life struggles. Each time we view evidence of God’s nearness and concern, it’s Christmas again!

Each time we experience the joy of life, it’s Christmas time again. I could not enumerate all the ways we can experience these joys, and I would not even if I could. For each new thing we learn about our Savior is like a specially-wrapped gift from God which each person needs the joy of unwrapping for him or herself. And the real exciting thing is that you never come to the point where you have unwrapped them all!

Throughout the year we also need to challenge ourselves to find new and different ways to keep on expressing our love in the Christmas spirit. We can send a note of love and concern to that loved one we normally only see at Christmas. We can, through our consideration of the thoughts and feelings of those around us, let them know we think they are important. I love the words of the James Taylor song which say, “Shower the people you love with love, show them the way you feel. Things will work out different if you only will.”

That’s what we need to do!

Our Scripture tells us that after the events surrounding Christ’s birth, “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.” We are called to follow Mary’s example, not leaving Christmas and it’s message behind, but keeping it, and pondering it in our heart. If we do that, then maybe each day can be Christmas!

-Pastor Keith

IMPORTANT CALLED CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING!

There will be a called church business meeting on Sunday January 15 immediately after services in the church auditorium. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the proposal from the Trustees and the Church Council to offer church property for sale. In order for this action to be taken the meeting must first consist of a quorum of church members, and second approval of two thirds of those present is needed. Please plan to attend this important meeting as your opinion is very important. Also on January 8th during coffee hour Myrl Venter, a real estate agent, is scheduled to be available to members to answer from her point of view any questions you may have. Duane Bowen, Moderator

Share a New Vision for Ministry

As most of you know, the church will be voting on whether or not to put the building up for sale. That vote will be on January 15th after worship. A sale, once approved will make a large amount of money available to us to do ministry. But what we need to do is to start now to open up our vision of what God can do through us with this money. What ministries would you like to see our church get involved in that we perhaps did not have money for before? Share your thoughts with the pastor and church Council. Ideas which have been suggested so far include starting a radio ministry; having a travel ministry with senior citizens where people can explore the Pacific Northwest together; adding someone to the staff to help us with a “niche” ministry, such as ministry to Asians or Hispanics; developing a Christian drama ministry; doing more advertising of our church in the media; developing a scholarship program for the homeless, to help them get vocational training... What would you add to our list of possibilities?

Special Dates for January

- New Year's Day, January 1, 2012
- Epiphany, January 6, 2012
- Baptism of the Lord, January 8, 2012
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance, January 16, 2012
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18–25, 2012

Speaker Series

We have two new speakers set up for our Speaker Series. The first you have gotten to know pretty well. Pastor Keith Madsen will speak on January 22nd (3-5 pm) at the Library on the topic "Faith and Fiction." He will be discussing fictional works (both Christian and secular) that speak to issues of faith. He will include information on classical and contemporary works, as well as some of his own writings.

The second speaker program we have set up is a really special one: on Saturday, March 17th (3-5 pm) "The Interfaith Amigos" will speak at our church. This one will be at our church because we anticipate more people coming than would fit in the library meeting room. The Interfaith Amigos are a Christian minister, a Rabbi, and an Islamic Imam, who through humor and spiritual insight address the issues of interfaith relations in a post-911 world. They have been on numerous talk shows and have authored two books: *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith*, and *Religion Gone Astray: What We Found at the Heart of Interfaith*. This is a much sought-after group of speakers and we are very fortunate to have them. Tell your friends!

LONG TERM PRAYER LIST

Perhaps you would like to add these church family members
to your prayer concerns:

1. Marge Armstrong, Lake Hills Family Home
2. Rose Matthai, Aegis Assisted Living
3. Robert (Bob) Pusch, Group Home, Burien
4. Ken Schmelzer, at home
5. Dorothy Swearson, Issaquah Care Center
6. Florence Watkins, Issaquah Care Center 805 Front Street Issaquah 98027
7. Martha Nordhagen Adams House, Oregon
8. Geri Hardesty
9. Joe Shultich 105 Mt Park Blvd SW #112, Issaquah 98027

January 2012 at CCI:

- WMF Meeting - Tuesday 1/3..... at 1:00 pm
- Deacons Meeting - Friday 1/6 -----at 10:30 am
- Trustees Meeting– Tuesday 1/3 ----- at 9:30 am
- Council Meeting - Sunday 1/8----- at 12:30 pm
- Bell Deadline - Wednesday 1/25

Happy January Birthday to.....



- 2 Sylvia Coulton
- 7 Sue Jensen
- 15 Dixie Rogers
- 17 Rose Matthai
- 20 Janine Cooper
- 23 Bill Weigant



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