



THE GRAPEVINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Published by Lamb of God Church | A Lutheran - Episcopal Congregation
19691 Cypress View Drive | Fort Myers, FL, 33967
Amy O'Malley: Editor
aomalley716@gmail.com

“Pennies for Preschoolers” A Huge Success

by Judy Charland

One of the highlights of Mission of Hope #43 was the honor of working with Fe y Esperanza (Faith and Hope) Preschool in Nicaragua. Although our main objective was to deliver school supplies to this preschool as part of the Lamb of God “Pennies for Preschoolers” Project, we experienced and accomplished much more. This preschool serves 40-50 children in a private home on the outskirts of the Managua dump, one of the poorest areas in Nicaragua. It is located about 20 minutes from the center of Managua and six blocks from the city dump. The neighborhood was formed nine years ago by former homeless people and the preschool has been in operation for four years. The current enrollment is 50 students ages three to six years.

As a result of the “Pennies for Preschoolers” project over \$400 was donated from members of Lamb of God and friends. This money was used to purchase school supplies and over 200 lbs. of supplies were carried in our suitcases including crayons, pencils, notebooks, dry erase boards, play dough, construction paper and glue. Additional school supplies were purchased locally in Nicaragua when we brought the teacher to a school supply store to pick out books, notebooks, instructional charts, and other supplies of her choice.

Funds were also used from the “Pennies” project to reconstruct a porch on the home and to paint the inside living room where the preschool is held. We all felt honored to work along with the teacher Maria, Fabricio our translator, and Norman his friend, as we painted and experienced the love they all have for these kids and for each other. It was a “Mission Moment” for all of us to see this home transformed into a better environment for kids in such a short period of time using few resources. We hope to continue our relationship with the Fe y Esperanza preschool .



Above: Norman and Fabricio are two 20 year old Nicaraguans who have helped create nine community preschools. **Below:** LOG Missioners Bob Luther, Don Olson, Bonnie Olson, Susan Nicoletti, and Judy Charland stand with preschool teacher, Maria (left) and founders of the preschool Fabricio and Norman.

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Lamb of God Office

(239) 267-3525 Phone
(239) 267-3043 Fax
office@lambogodchurch.net

Office Hours

9:30 - 3:30
Tuesday - Friday

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor: **Walter Fohs**
wfohs@comcast.net

Pastoral Assistant:
Anne Robbins
annerobbins@comcast.net

Director of Operations:
RC Fleeman
administrator@lambogodchurch.net

Music Director: Trent Brown
trent.dma@gmail.com

Children's and Youth Ministry:
Kathleen Busbee
kbusbee@lambogodchurch.net

Asst. Director of Operations:
Wendy Smith
wendy@lambogodchurch.net

Communication Specialist:
Veronica Opalensky
veronica@lambogodchurch.net

Parish Nurse: Sherrie Herbst
bflylady@embarqmail.com

Nursery Attendant:
Lisa Pietrzyk
lisapietrzyk@aol.com

Worship Pianist: Faron Vassen
fvassen@eagle.fgcu.edu

Technical Coordinator:
Jim Boggs
bigboggs@comcast.net

Maintenance and Set Up Staff:
Bill McKnight - John Stefl
Ron Tvedt

Progressive Dinner

The annual progressive dinner will be held on Saturday, February 25, 2012. Sign up sheets will be out the end of January. If you've never been to a progressive dinner here's what we do . . . each person is put into group of 8-10 people . . . you start at one home for appetizers, go to another home for the main meal, then everyone ends up back at the church for dessert. If you would like to host an appetizer or main meal please indicate that on the sign up sheet. Childcare will be available that evening. For more details, call Barbara Tvedt at (239) 267-7271.

Fellowship Breakfast

WHEN: Sunday, February 5, 2012

WHERE: The Arbor - Fellowship Hall

TIME: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

COST: \$5.00 for adults (children under 16 eat for free)

New Members

We will be accepting new members on Sunday, February 19th. If you are interested in joining Lamb of God please contact Wendy Smith in the church office by February 13th.

Offering Envelopes

If you are a regular giver or if you have pledged, you will receive offering envelopes. Anyone can have offering envelopes – you do not have to be a member. The number on the envelopes helps us to associate your giving with you and we are able to provide valuable tracking information for you. If you have a question or concern about your pledge or giving then we can look up your giving by your envelope number. We also provide year end tax statements.

Many people have commented that they don't know why they still receive offering envelopes if they give electronically or with automatic withdrawal. When we have the envelopes printed we have to get every number in the range (ex: 1-300), therefore we still pay for those envelopes so we then provide them to you as well. Some people like to have them for holidays or special giving. If you give electronically and do not wish to have the envelopes please contact Wendy Smith in the church office and she will recycle them.

LAMB OF GOD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bill Monsees: President - designconcepts@comcast.net
Judith Olson: Vice President - judithgran@arvig.net
Eileen Wood: Secretary - ewood70127@aol.com
Dean Piccirillo: Treasurer - deanpiccirillo@hotmail.com
Mike Ducar - mikeducar@hotmail.com

Jody Ladwig - 4pawsx4@comcast.net
Judy Ross - jnlross@chartermi.net
Kelly Schoen - shanerkt@yahoo.com
Stu Senneff - ssenneff@aol.com
Marj Waskom - waskom4751@comcast.net

Thrift Shop News

by Marj Waskom

The Thrift Shop held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 8th. An election was held to fill the vacancies on the Board. The Board for 2012 will be:

Marj Waskom--Chairman	Arnie McFarlane--First Vice Chairman
Carroll Nelson--Second Vice Chairman	Davia McFarlane--Secretary
Jim Rawsy--Treasurer	Carol Fisher--Board Member
Sharon McLaughlin--Board Member	

It was announced that during 2011, the Thrift Shop, after expenses, gave a total of \$106,500 to the following:

Lamb of God Operating Fund	\$53,250
Interfaith Caregivers	34,300
Good Shepherd Ministries	7,635
Guadalupe Soup Kitchen	6,000
Mission of Hope	430
Gabriel House	3,985
Youth Mission	400
Dominican Mission	500

About 85 persons volunteer at the shop--50 of those are members of Lamb of God, and 35 are non-members. We are so pleased to know that outsiders think so highly of our shop that they want to volunteer with us! It is our purpose to reach out to the community and needy in service to our Lord Jesus Christ through outreach programs, and by extending to all who enter the Thrift Shop, a warm Christian welcome.

Thank You From Head Start

Lamb of God received a heart-felt thank you from the recipients of all the generously donated Jesus Birthday Tree gifts. Here are some of the kind words sent to us in a lovely Thank You Card:

- ◆ Thanks. There are no words to express our gratitude to you. The Lord knows your hearts and how much love you want to share with your goodness. Blessings from above!
- ◆ What a remarkably generous spirit you have shown to those less fortunate in our community! The families are so thankful! It really lifts their spirits in these tough times!
- ◆ To all, thank you so much for your generosity! Many of our families would not have had Christmas if not for your congregation. Much love!

Ladies Bunco and Left, Right, Center Night

6:30 pm on Thursday, February 16th in the Fellowship Hall

(You will have to attend to find out what it's all about.)

Other dates scheduled are Tuesday, March 20th and Thursday, April 19th

Please bring a beverage or appetizer to share and 7 one dollar bills. Come early to help set-up or stay late to help clean-up. Friends and family are welcome!

Sunday's Cool and Youth Group News

by Kathleen Busbee

LAMB OF GOD'S GOT TALENT

Attention All LOG Family and Friends: Can you sing, dance, act, play an instrument, tell a joke, paint a picture, or whistle "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with crackers in your mouth? Or do you enjoy watching other people try to do these things? Then the soon to be famous, "**Lamb of God's Got Talent**", is for you!!!!

Get ready for a spectacular night watching a variety of talents from Lamb of God's family and friends. This event will be held Friday, March 23 at LOG. There will be a delicious dinner preceding the show of a life-time! More detailed information to come, and tickets will go on sale at the beginning of March. So mark the date on your calendar and start practicing your talent! This event is sponsored by the LOG Youth Group and will serve as a Mission Trip Fund Raiser.

SUNDAY'S COOL NEWS

Our annual bike parade and pizza party will be Sunday, Feb 26, at LOG at 5:00. Bring and decorate bikes, scooters, skates, anything you like to ride with wheels, and we will have a parade around the LOG parking lot. Please bring a side dish or dessert and \$5 a family for pizza and drinks.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

LOG-IN – The middle school program meets every Wednesday night 6-7:30 for food, fun and fellowship. The group is watching and discussing a series of short Nooma videos dealing with everyday issues from a biblical perspective.

3DL – The high school/college program meets every Wednesday night from 7-8:30 for food, fun, and fellowship. The group is watching and discussing the "Biography of Jesus", a History Channel production. The group has begun fundraising for our 3rd annual Key West Mission Trip taking place at the end of July 2012. We will also be attending a spiritual "Happenings Retreat" the first weekend of March at Day Spring Episcopal Center.

HAPPY, HAPPY!

In February we honor:

Kelly Kibbey who will celebrate her 21st birthday on February 5th
DeAnna Boddie who will celebrate her 65th birthday on February 11th

And we wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day on February 14th

*If we missed your date or you do not want your name included,
please call Marj Waskom at (239) 489-1134.*



LUTHERANS AND EPISCOPALIANS REACH OUT TO OTHER FAITHS

Both Lutherans and Episcopalians in their local, national and international initiatives reach out to people of other faith traditions, especially Judaism and Islam. The picture below is of Sayyid M. Sayeed, General Secretary of the Islamic Society of North America, speaking to the delegates of the bi-annual meeting of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in national assembly, in Orlando August 15th – 19th.

'PEACE BE WITH YOU' ...

ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA leader shares deep appreciation for the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH in AMERICA



"In the words of Jesus Christ, as documented for us in the New Testament ... a *salaam aleikum*," said Sayyid M. Sayeed, offering the first-ever official greeting from an Islamic leader to an ELCA Churchwide Assembly. After a surprised pause, the assembly replied: "And also with you." Sayeed, general secretary of the Islamic Society of North America, said jokingly, "a Lutheran loved his wife ... and he was about to tell her." When the assembly finished laughing over this example of Lutheran shyness, he added, "The ELCA broke that stereotype when they established a committee on Muslim-Lutheran relationships and that committee conveyed to Muslims that 'We love you.'"

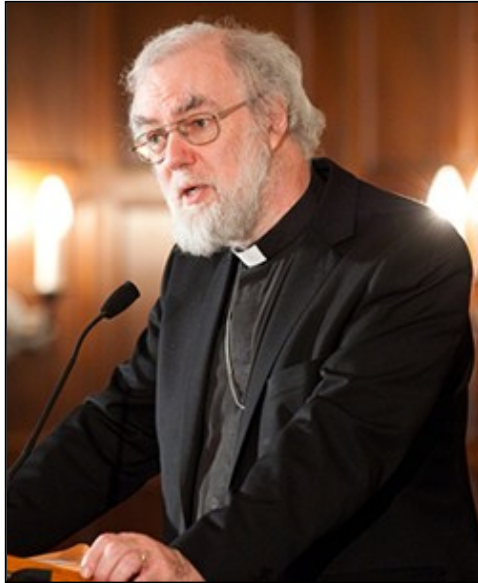
Sayeed praised ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson for "saying truth to the [powerful about] difficult issues," from peace in the Middle East to "anti-Muslim bigotry in America." Relationships between Lutherans and Muslims were born out of standing "against the veil of anti-Muslim sentiment that we have experienced together," he said.

"Lutherans have played a major role in educating Americans about the suffering of Palestinians...", he added. "God's desire is to promote justice and peace [everywhere], including the Holy Land."

"We are together shaping the new millennium. Mountains of hate and discrimination have been built. Our job is to see those mountains removed. No particular church, no particular religious community, no nation on earth can fight those mountains of misunderstanding alone. We pray for God almighty to bless us, strengthen us and inspire us, so that we can together deliver this mission that is ours."

In response, Bishop Hanson said Sayeed had come during the Muslim season of Ramadan "as a prophet and as a friend." Over applause, Hanson continued, "I hope you hear our response to you being here, and beneath it, our commitment to walking together."





**THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
LEADER OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION ACROSS THE WORLD
WHICH INCLUDES THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA**

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Building Bridges Seminar

The Building Bridges Seminar, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, is a unique annual series which brings together a range of internationally recognized Christian and Muslim scholars for intensive study. Texts from the Christian and Islamic traditions are used as the basis for discussion in a program that includes public lectures and private sessions. The 2011 seminar took place at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, May 17-19, 2011.

History of the Seminar

In January 2002, not long after the events of September 11, 2001 had underlined the need for sustained efforts in developing better Christian-Muslim relations, the first Building Bridges Seminar for Muslim and Christian scholars was hosted at Lambeth Palace in London by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey. One of the first overseas visits made by Dr Rowan Williams, when he succeeded Dr Carey in 2003, was to chair the second Building Bridges seminar in Qatar. Since then, Dr Williams has made a priority of continuing this initiative and has chaired further seminars in Washington DC, Sarajevo, Singapore, Rome and Istanbul. The seminars, each lasting three days, have explored a number of the most significant themes in the interface between Islam and Christianity: scripture; prophecy; the common good; justice and rights; human nature; interpretation; science and religion; tradition and modernity; prayer. Proceedings of the first six seminars have been published and others are in production.

Loving Our Neighbor

by Pastor Walter Fohs

The issue of learning how to love our neighbors has always been a difficult question for Christians to both understand and put into practice. History has always given witness to the reality that over the years people who believe in Jesus and practice Christianity have most always either invented or discovered certain groups of human beings that they have decided they will “not accept, respect, tolerate or love” in spite of the consistent and clear teaching of Jesus. The inconsistency between what people believe and how we practice what we believe has always been a reality for the church and an embarrassment to our witness to the world.

In my life time I have witnessed both the Church and Christian people say words and practice behaviors that have been hurtful, destructive, prejudicial, judgmental, arrogant, rude, and hateful to a variety of groups of human beings. Obviously, many of these groups have, in part or as a large group, also behaved in ways that have been equally offensive to the people of the world and to Christians.

Ultimately, the teachings of Jesus invite and encourage us to follow many of the saints of the church who over the years learned and practiced the art of forgiveness, patience, tolerance and a willingness to practice our Christian values over our fears and prejudices. However, some of us Christians have always found reasons (some legitimate) to not only hate some of our neighbors but also continue to seek further reasons for reinforcing our negative prejudices.

I was born in 1944, into a Christian/American world where Imperial Japanese and Nazi Germans were the people to hate and fear. Understandingly there was a reason, but for how long? In my early years I recall the prejudice and judgementalism regarding Judaism and the people who practiced and lived that faith tradition, and the judgementalism of many Christians.

In my later years I recall all the hatred and prejudice regarding “The Hippies” who seemingly were “out to destroy our American Culture” and so we both feared and grew to hate what they represented. Around the same time the “people of color” or “Black People” found a voice and leadership and rose up with their “Freedom Marches” and demonstrations. Once again many “white Christians” forgot or ignored the teachings of Jesus and in the name of Jesus actively discriminated against our fellow human beings out of fear and hatred for our fellow citizens.

When the Cold War and then the Vietnam War came onto the world scene we learned about two new cultures to both fear and hate, Russian Communists and the Viet-Kong. Gay and Lesbian people also represented over time a population of human beings who seemed somehow to be so different that the Church and many Christians not only rejected such folks but lived in fear and hatred of what they might do to destroy “the fabric of America.” Lately, the influx of legal and illegal immigrants into our nation has provided another “perceived threat” to the USA and the new cultures that they bring with them. So out of fear we once again discriminate and refuse to live out the commands of Jesus. Judgmentalism and prejudice continues to reign in many corners of the American dream.

So, how do we talk about Jesus’ command to love in today’s world? One way could be to go back in history and remember what it was like when we were taught to fear Russian Communists, or Hippies, or the Viet-Kong, or maybe hate the Japanese who bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941? Or do we speak to each other about our fears today, the issues that we see on the evening news, that are not only relevant but speak to the human heart asking, who is Jesus asking me to love, forgive, try to understand, and live with today in harmony and grace?

We Christians have a very long history of fearing people who we do not like, do not understand, or whose culture and religion are foreign to us. Instead of learning about something new (someone else’s faith tradition) which is a sign of respect and maturity, we will generalize and assume that when a small number of any group does something “horrific,” as what happened on 9/11/01 in New York City, it seems that our only response is to assume that every Muslim is going to do something equally devastating to the rest of us and so we will hate and mistrust all Muslims.

I refuse to join in the fearful and prejudiced views of many American citizens and ask you to consider standing with me. In the name of Jesus and together with the leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America, I will stand by my Islamic friends, and **with the ELCA and the Episcopal Church USA**, together we continue to embrace a worldview that God is a God of love and that Jesus has mandated that we do everything that we can do to learn how to love “all of our neighbors,” no matter where they live or what they believe.

DISCOVERING THE ONENESS OF GOD IN ALL FAITH TRADITIONS

Fifth Annual Spirituality Conference Theme: That All May Be One

Episcopal priest Eric Law, an internationally respected author and consultant, will give the keynote address entitled: Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear.

There will be workshops on Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as one given by Eric Law on **Inclusion: Making Room for Grace**. Workshop presenters include Kadam JoAnn Lawrence, Ms. Chris Lapidus, Imam Mohamed Al-Darsani, Pastor Jim Rosemergy and Pastor Walter Fohs.

When: Saturday, February 4, 2012, 9:00AM to 4:00PM

Place: Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, 1225 Piper Boulevard, Naples, FL 34110

Cost: \$30 per person

A continental breakfast will be provided, but please bring your own brown bag lunch

Call 239-728-3614 or send an email to info@moghop.com

Membership Services Ministry

by Jody Ladwig

UPDATE ON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES: Judith Olson presented the first draft of the proposed Bookmark handout based upon input from our last meeting and suggestions from Lamb of God's Director of Operations. This draft is now in its secondary review. There was much excitement about progress to date. The handout is intended to collect information on visitors and new members as well as assist in linking these people into our church organization. To date pricing appears favorable. If the graphics can be resolved at the February meeting, it is hoped to roll this program out in late February or early March.

Barbara Tvedt has been spearheading activity on refinements to the Welcome Desk function. New signage that will provide better visibility has been designed and was approved at the meeting. This signage is portable and can be removed each week after the service. Coordination with the "Catch the Spirit" campaign will determine some of the dates for implementation as well as decisions regarding the newer materials to be added to the desk. Also still under consideration is providing a welcome packet with a smaller folder and new look. Barbara is the manager of the "Welcome Desk" which is to be renamed, "Information and Visitor Center." Persons wishing to add items to the desk are asked to contact Barbara Tvedt in advance in order to provide appropriate coordination.

The meeting was concluded with George Alexakis reminding the committee of the Lamb of God cruise in March and encouraging participation of all who are able to book this time. The week long cruise promises to be a special time for Lamb of God members to get to know one another in an informal setting. This is in concert with the goal of the Membership Services Committee: to promote a sense of community across the congregation.

WHO ARE WE AND HOW DO WE CALL OUR PASTORS?

by RC Fleeman

Periodically, as new members join our congregation, we print something to help us all understand the nature and principles of our unique church family ... and to answer questions people may have. A good question that is often asked is, "If we call ourselves a Lutheran-Episcopal congregation, why do we not have an Episcopal Priest on our staff?"

The first answer to this question was answered by the congregation in response to last year's stewardship campaign, raising funds for the 2011 budget. Estimates of Giving for 2011 were insufficient to pay the proposed salary of a second Pastor, an Episcopal Priest, for the year. We still have a vacant position that Pastor Walter has been trying to fill, in part, for the past year and in the last five months of 2010. The Episcopal Diocese will not allow us to call a priest until we can show that we have sufficient income to continue to pay them once we call them.

The second answer comes from our founding documents, approved by the joint congregation in 2004, then slightly amended by the congregation in 2007. These documents allow for an Episcopal Priest and a Lutheran Pastor to be called as lead clergy for this congregation. Those same documents also allow for two Episcopal Priests to serve this congregation alone or two Lutheran Pastors to serve Lamb of God Church alone. When two pastors are called however, those same documents indicate that every effort should be made to have representation from both the ELCA (Lutheran) and Episcopal Church USA. Currently, because we have not called an Episcopal Priest, Pastor Fohs, a Lutheran Pastor, is recognized by the Episcopal Diocese as "the Priest in Charge" when representing our church.

It is also important to point out that Lamb of God is neither a Lutheran or Episcopal congregation exclusively ... we are both at the same time. Those in full membership at Lamb of God are considered to be members of both the ELCA and the Episcopal Church. We do look to both denominations for leadership on global and national issues, but on a local level, my view is that Lamb of God is more like a community church. Here's why I say that: while denomination affiliation is important to many, we do not overly emphasize it. With the new members that have been added over the past two to three years, we probably have as many people from other denominational backgrounds as we have Lutherans and Episcopalians. In fact, some of our newer members had no church background prior to coming to Lamb of God. We identify as a church that is open to all, regardless of faith background. As denominational membership continues to decline in the United States, Lamb of God will defy that trend if we remain boldly inclusive, intentionally challenging and joyfully Christian.

DID YOU MISS IT? IT WAS A BLAST!

by RC Fleeman

TRIVIA NIGHT at Lamb of God was a BLAST. Art and Susan Nicoletti put the event together on Sunday, January 29th and it was attended by more than 150 people. 100 of those were from outside the Lamb of God church family who heard about the fun to be had. Apparently, many of them have participated in Trivia events at other locations and they heard Lamb of God's Trivia Night was going to be the "best ever" with state of the art video and audio. A highlight of the night however, was not trivia. Instead it was a look back at Feeding the 5000 and the volunteer effort that goes into that. Many who participated from outside of the Lamb of God Church family support Feeding the 5000 with both their money and their time. What we heard that night wasn't trivial at all ... we were told that **"Helping others can be very rewarding and a lot of fun."** Proceeds from Trivia Night will help fund Feeding the 5000 this year, so it truly was an event that allowed the participants to have fun while helping others. Thanks to Jeff and Cindy Clark ... to Jeff for serving as the Master of Ceremonies and to Cindy for helping keep score. Thanks to Tom and Anne Mullins for preparing a traditional Thanksgiving meal. And ... a GREAT BIG THANKS to Kassie and Devan Monsees for their work in the Techie Booth that evening, and for the many hours spent preparing video and sound prior to the event.