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Return Service Requested



### VILLAGE NIGHT 2.0

Village Night, our Wednesday night fellowship program, is back with exciting upgrades! In past years, the focus was on families with children. This year, we are broadening that focus so that everyone in our faith community has an opportunity to participate in Wednesday night activities. **New adult groups continue to form.** If you have an idea for an adult small group, please contact Terry Baird at [ffd@flrb.org](mailto:ffd@flrb.org), or call her at 206-546-4153, ext. 225.



### "BLUE CHRISTMAS, A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE"

First Lutheran will offer a special worship service on Sunday, December 4th, at 2:30 P.M., for all who may be feeling alone or down this year. The service is called "Blue Christmas, a Service of Remembrance and Hope." Blue Christmas worship is quiet and meditative, with candles and soft music, and speaks of hope, comfort, and light in the midst of darkness. It will be followed by a time for light refreshments, fellowship and suggestions on how to make it through the holidays.

Invite your neighbor or friend who may not have a church home, or who is lonely or hurting during this season. - Sponsored by Stephens Ministry



**WOMEN OF THE WORD**, Wednesday night women's fellowship, happens weekly as part of Village Nights. We will begin a new study at 6:30p.m., Wednesday, January 4th. This is a great time to join in! All area welcome. Look for more details soon to come! If you have any questions, please email ([ahilding001@luthersem.edu](mailto:ahilding001@luthersem.edu)) or call (206-546-4153) Intern Alicia.

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## A WORD FROM PASTOR BJORGE

### A Season of Darkness

I've never run a marathon but I hear that there's a time when runners hit the dreaded "wall." Apparently it happens when a runner's glycogen (stored energy) in their muscles is depleted forcing them to slow their pace considerably.

Christians can face a similar phenomenon. In the spiritual realm we would call it entering "the dark night of the soul." That's a phrase coined by St. John of the Cross back in the 1500s. During such a dark night, God seems absent. It's a time of bleakness and abandonment. Prayer is difficult, faith is a struggle, assurance erodes.

Lots of people, including atheists, experience darkness and sense God's absence. But a "dark night of the soul" is only something someone experiences after knowing life in Christ. It's only those who've walked in the light of Christ who can know the "dark night of the soul" because only they know what it is to have had the light they've come to cherish and trust go out.

**But it's in the dark that God does His best work!** The ancient mystics teach us that dark nights are not problems to be overcome but opportunities. The question is not "how do I fix this?" but "what might I learn in this?" It's not about getting *over it* but getting *through it!* And what it teaches *me* is that I'm not a ministry superhero. I was called to follow Jesus, not to be Him. It's teaching me that I, along with us all, are being invited into a glorious purging where the old self and its worldly loves are shed and being replaced by a new and deeper love for Jesus, for others, and even for one's self... and mostly a realization of how loved each of us are by a heavenly Father who longs to see each of us made whole!

Welcome to winter, to darkness, to Advent! May it be a time when God does His best work in you and, in time, makes you whole!

--Pastor John





### NEW COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Our popular New Community Class which meets between the two worship services each Sunday will, starting in January, become the NEW COMMUNITY WORSHIP. We will plan to add to Pastor John's prayers and teaching worship and praise music both before and after the teaching time. This way if there are those who'd like to

make that their worship experience for the morning, they can do so. We hope we'll draw new people who'll want to attend since this may well satisfy their need for not just teaching, but for worship as well. But if you're planning on this continuing to be your education experience for the morning and plan to continue to worship at 8:30 or 11:00, have no fear. The teaching and music will continue to be different from the other worship services so you won't feel like what's being done is redundant.

In December Pastor John will focus the New Community hour on Christmas, offering two classes on the deeper meaning of the Christmas miracle. In January, once we begin to make it a worship experience, he will focus for six weeks on the prayer our Lord gave to His disciples—what we call the Lord's Prayer. Join us each and every Sunday at 9:45 in the Upper Room and experience the power of God's Word as it comes to Life!

### OUTREACH

Reach Out • Motivate • Provide

### HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Again, you will have the opportunity to support Heifer International. The booth will be in the narthex on December 6th, 13th and 20th. Gift cards are available to let people know you are giving this gift in their honor. Support for this agency enables people virtually world wide, through gift animals and close to a year's training program to become self sufficient with a sense of pride and self confidence.

### SANCTUARY

In January, we will focus on the work that Pastor Chris Buller is doing with the Native Americans near Madras, OR. Chris will be coming to FLRB to preach and we will enjoy a fellowship meal with him and some of his youth. Outreach offerings will go to support his ministry.

### MARY'S PLACE

Our yearlong support for Mary's Place continues. During the months of November & December we will be collecting children's underwear (all sizes), gloves/mittens, hats and scarves—for both women and children. Look for the donation box outside the school office. The response has been overwhelming so far! Each week the box fills up and is picked up and amazingly the same thing happens next week! Thank you for your generous hearts!!!!

## FLRB CONCERT SERIES

**"ADMIRABLE"  
ANTICIPATING THE WONDER OF ANTIPHONY AT ADVENT  
Friday, December 2nd at 7:00pm**

The Esoterics is recognized as the one of the premier vocal ensembles in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. This concert will be combining settings of the "O" antiphons in three languages and from three national traditions: Antiphonae by Pawel Lukasewski, the great "O" antiphons by John Muelheisen and Seben magnificat antiphonen by Arvo Pärt.

### "A BRITISH CHRISTMAS"

**Friday, December 16th at 7:00pm**

This concert will feature various ensemble of the FLRB Music Ministry. The program will include an array of music from the British Isles performed by the Cantorei Choir, Jubilate Bells and the FLRB Chamber Singers. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate the holidays!



### IMPORTANT YEAR-END TAX INFORMATION

Please remember that in order to claim a deduction for contributions you make to First Lutheran this year, the IRS states that we must receive your contribution **by December 31, 2011**. Contributions that you make in the New Year cannot be deducted on this year's tax return, even if the check is backdated. The one exception is if the check is written, mailed and **postmarked 2011**, it can be deducted even if it is not received by the church until the New Year. First Lutheran will follow these IRS guidelines in issuing your year end statements.

Offering envelopes for 2012 are available in the narthex through December for your pick up. If you do not find envelopes issued in your name, and would like to have envelopes, please call Carolee at the church office. We would love to assign you a number! Thank You!



### PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN NEWS

Christmas songs and busy elves abound in the halls of First Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten. Everyone is getting ready for fun and programs.

Just in time for Christmas giving – SCRIPS gift cards. Our order dates are December 2 & 9 – But you don't have to wait. We now have an inventory of QFC/Fred Meyer, PCC, Safeway, Jack in the Box, Spiros, Coldstone Creamery Subway, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Starbucks, AMC Theaters, Regal Theaters, iTunes, Barnes &

Noble & Eddie Bauer – plus you can order from 100's of other vendors....Best of all the school receives a percentage back from the businesses!

### MARY'S PLACE

The Pre-school staff will be serving lunch on January 3 – so in December we will be asking for donation of food. We will also be collecting cash for meat for our Chili Lunch.

Christmas programs-Dec. 12, 13 10:30AM & Dec. 15 at 11:00 AM. If you want to start your Christmas out right – come and hear the children sing!!!!

For more information on all of these events please call 206-546-0320 or stop by the school office .



### PARENT'S NIGHT OUT- A Childcare Fundraiser

December 2<sup>nd</sup> 5:00pm-10:00pm

December 11<sup>th</sup> 12:30 pm-5:00pm

**\$20-first child, \$10-second child, \$5 each additional child**

This is a fundraiser for the high school youth going to the National youth

gathering this summer.

If you wish to sign up please contact

Terry Baird 206-546-4152 ext.228 or [ffd@flrb.org](mailto:ffd@flrb.org)

### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND POTLUCK DINNER

December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

Come see the kids and youth of FLRB tell the Christmas story and stay for a potluck dinner afterwards!

### CRAB FEED JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>

A fundraiser to support the high school youth going to New Orleans for the national gathering as well as for other FLRB ministries.



### KUDOS TO OUR GARDEN CARETAKERS

This past year our church family and surrounding neighborhoods have been blessed and refreshed once again by the loving stewardship of our church landscaping crew. Over a dozen dedicated volunteers scheduled time every month (or bimonthly) to maintain a particular garden bed, removing weeds, spent flowers, and trash. The Preschool staff and janitor helped with summer watering. Such care has rewarded us with healthy, thriving plants and a beautiful, welcoming presence to our facility—our church home. We also deeply appreciate the generous donations from those who contributed to our lawn service fund. These contributions were essential in keeping our grass lawns neat and tidy over the spring and summer months.

So, if you see **Rob and Cindy McCuiston, Russ, Mitch, and Dana Davies, Frankie and Bruce Johnson, Bob and Oddny Johnston, Judy Poulsen, Bev Klein, Mel and Sylvia Pugh, Jim and Pat Shilt, Margret Voetmann, Glen and Dorothy Nelson, or Phillip and Marian Thom**, please give them a (green) "thumbs up" for they have truly created a garden of delights.

### A BIG THANK YOU!

Operation Christmas Child and the Thanksgiving Basket programs were both a great success. We would like to thank you for all of your donations and the participants who helped organize and distribute the gifts. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.