

CHRISTMAS STORIES OF RENEWAL

There are two things that I often try to add to my own personal celebrations in this season of Advent and Christmas. One is to try to read from the original text, A Christmas Carol, especially the concluding stave. Hollywood has gotten its hands on this wonderful story, and some versions are better than other. The recent animated version by Disney is quite good. But a quiet time spent reading from Dickens is a wonderful use of valuable time, even though I know how the story ends.

The other thing that I like to do is to watch "It's A Wonderful Life." Yes, I know it is corny, and black and white, and Frank Capra seems so out of date from 2012, but I like it. Good stories need to be heard, or watched, or read more than once.

It seems that both George Bailey and Ebenezer Scrooge had a narrowness of vision that required supernatural enlightenment, either in the person of Clarence, or the Three Spirits. These are not necessarily Christian stories on the surface, beyond being placed in the season of Christmas holidays, but I cannot help but see the Grace of God at work in the lives of Ebenezer and George. They need it, and so do I.

Ebenezer has slowly and persistently turned his back on people and loved ones until the only thing in his life that

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Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Celeste Stubbs

(Continued on page 2)

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING December 11th

A special meeting of the Congregation will take place on Sunday, December 11, 2011 following the 10am worship service (only 1 service that day—sorry, no 8:15 service). The meeting is to vote on calling Pastor Kevin Bates to be our next pastor. If approved, a second vote will be made on a compensation package.

The Call Committee has selected Pastor Bates as their candidate of choice, and the Congregation Council has approved that choice. A 'meet and greet' event was held on November 27th. Now it is time to VOTE. A QUORUM is required. A representative of the Bishop's Office will be present.

See Pastor Kevin Bates' bio on page 3.

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matters is his wealth. For all of his money, he has a very small life, with no friends, no connections to family, and no reason to celebrate. (There have been times that the words, "Bah! Humbug!" have come out of my mouth.) But in the end of it, he wakes up to a new day, a new world, and all the possibilities of life before him. He takes hold and reclaims his life by giving himself away.

"Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him. "

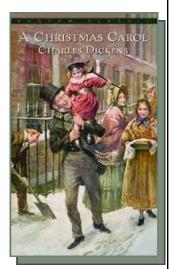
George was a good boy who grew into a good man, known for his loyalty, integrity, and generosity. He turned in his hopes for steamships, and airplanes, and building huge skyscrapers for following in his fathers place as caretaker of the Bailey Building and Loan. His growing family in a "drafty old house" would keep him in Bedford Falls, far from where he thought the action of life was. At his

lowest point, he thought that the world would be better off without him. Clarence the Angel second class allows him to observe a world without a George Bailey, and how much of a difference his life has made. It is his friends and family who come to support him with gifts of love gratitude. He discovers the meaning of his life in terms he never imagined. "No man is a failure if he has friends."

I can't read these stories without seeing God at work in Jesus Christ. It is Christ who forgives the sins of our past life and offers redemption for a new life. It is Christ who gives meaning to our lives and gives us a reason to live. We find in those around us, both close loved ones, and complete strangers, the face of Christ as "one of the least of these." We are created by God to share our life with others as Christ has shared his life with us. I read or see these stories knowing that there is more at work than just the words themselves. Jesus is "the WORD" who came to dwell among and within us, full of grace and truth.

May you find special blessing in this season of rejoicing. "GOD BLESS US, EVERYONE!"

Pastor Doug







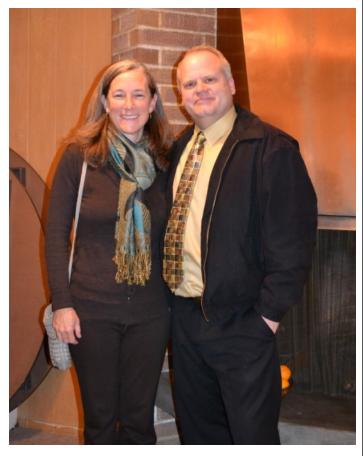
Pastor Kevin Bates - Brief Biography - November 2011

I was born and raised in South King County, attending schools in the Kent School District until I was ten. In the 1970's, my family relocated to Battle Ground, Spokane and Puyallup. I graduated from Puyallup High School in 1980.

I attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma from 1980-1984, graduating with a degree in European History. For two summers, I worked for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Oregon.

Following college, I was hired as the youth director for Cross & Crown and Renton Lutheran Churches. During this time, I led a large group to the National Youth Gathering in Denver, Colorado, and led hiking trips to Holden Village. It was during this time that I met Marcia Erickson, who worked as a youth director at St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Bellevue.

I moved to Chicago in 1987, to attend seminary. I interned at Wiley Lutheran Church in Ellisville, IL (near the banks of the Spoon River). During seminary, I worked in food service, in a frame shop, and as a docent in a local museum. Marcia and I were married in St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Bellevue, WA.



My first pastoral call was at Northlake Lutheran Church, in Cook County, Illinois. This western suburb congregation began to experience growth in worship attendance, Sunday School and adult education. In my tenure at Northlake, together with five other congregations, we started a feeding program for local people in need.

Marcia's father died in 1995, which motivated us to move back to the Northwest. My second, and current call, to Advent Lutheran church in Mill Creek began the following year. Advent was one of four "fresh start" congregations that our synod identified for intentional redevelopment. Upon arrival at Advent there was 30 in Sunday morning worship and \$50,000 in annual giving. We were fortunate to grow in worship attendance and annual giving. In 2000, we sold our property to Lowe's Hardware Corporation, and relocated the building to new property we purchased 1.5 miles east of our former location. We worshipped in a Catholic High School gymnasium for two years before moving back to our old building on our new site. In 2008, we dedicated our new sanctuary and education building. Currently, our worship attendance is 240, with a \$450,000 budget.

Our sons came into our lives as infants, through adoption. Our older son is in the 6th grade, and our younger son is in the 5th. Their interests are in reading, science, baseball, soccer, and biking. Marcia will be graduate student in Marriage and Family Therapy in the fall of 2012. I am completing my Doctoral of Ministry degree through San Francisco Theological Seminary. Our family has traveled to Germany, France and England in 2010.



Lutheran Ministry Services

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"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great Joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11, ESV)

A Chaplain's Story

"Do you believe in angels?" "What happens when you die?" "Have you ever met people who have talked about dying and coming back to life?" Occasionally questions like these have been brought up by people I have visited. For some people, such questions fall into the "things I've always wondered about" category. For others, such questions lie on the surface of deeper questions about faith and finding meaning in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Having been with many very ill people over the years – even those who have been at the brink of death and who have "come back," there is one supernatural experience that I have heard repeated by many. It is an experience that is really fantastic to hear. Its truth can be seen in the way that it is said. The expressions of the people who have talked about it bear witness to it.

That supernatural experience can be summed up by these words, "I am at peace." Those who have been able to say that and mean it have a supernatural gift that has been given to them by the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus, himself through faith.

Are you in difficult circumstances yourself? Are you looking for deeper meaning? Are there things about the Christian faith you have "always wondered about?" If so, take some time to consider the message that the angels gave the shepherds. Consider the good news of great joy that unto you a Savior has been born, Christ the Lord. Absorb what Scripture has to say about the promises that Jesus brings. If you do, don't be surprised when that supernatural gift of peace is given to you. May the peace of God that really does surpass all human understanding guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus!

Chaplain Arthur Werzner

Care Center Ministry

Many of our beloved elderly are living in a setting where their physical needs are being attended to, but they still thirst for spiritual quenching. As I present worship services at six of these facilities in North Seattle, I have been warmed by the genuine response of gratitude.

I have found that an object lesson and lots of hymn singing keeps them awake and alert. With Christmas coming, most are aware of "The Real Story". I asked a group this week to tell me their favorite Christmas carol and why. They joined in immediately: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night" because you feel like you are actually there. "Joy to the World" because the reason for that JOY at Christmas is simply Jesus' birth, as was promised. "Away in a Manger" because that was the first song they learned, complete with motions! The gentleman in the group added, "We 3 Kings" because he felt the grandeur of the event when even Kings elected to visit this baby. One lady mentioned "Wind Through the Olive Trees" as a traditional hymn sung every Christmas at her church. My favorite has always been "Angels We Have Heard on High" when the 'GLORIA, IN EXCELSIS DEO' chorus seems to be the loudest that fills the church at Christmas!

My object lesson this week? A large gift bag with a wrapped present pictured on it and a tag that said "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!" Too often we forget that the very reason for the 'Christmas celebration is a Birthday Party for Jesus days on earth. SO, we sang: "Happy Birthday to you…dear Jesus!" I am always so refreshed by sharing God's love with the "Older Sheep", whose memories of the present may be failing, but their memories from childhood at Christmas seem as fresh as ever.



Deaconess Charlene Rhoades-Koenigs



This Advent, Consider Our Chaplain's Appeal and Give to LMSN

The gift you give today allows our Chaplain, Deaconess, and volunteers to continue to minister to those who are hurting in body, soul, or spirit.

Reprinted from the December 2011 LMSN Newsletter

God Is Among Us Through Jesus by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop

I am sitting in the airport after attending the fall meeting of the Church Council in Chicago. I am now serving as the *Liaison Bishop* from Region One to the council.

At this meeting Mark Johnson, member of Magnolia Lutheran in Seattle and a member of the Churchwide Council, was elected chair of the Constitution and Legal Review Committee of the council and by that office to the Executive Committee. This committee is responsible for reviewing the Churchwide constitution and the model constitutions for synods and congregations. It is also responsible for the *standing rules* for the Churchwide Assembly.

I am writing about this not because of the business of the council, but because of two *Dwelling in the Word* presentations that two members of the council presented. Four times during the council meeting members were invited to share their reflections on a favorite Bible verse or story. In these two presentations Ephesians 2:8-10 was the basis of the reflection.

I have pointed out before that Ephesians 2:8-9 was the verse assigned to me at my confirmation. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--not the result of works, so that no one may boast."

This verse challenges us to remember that we live by the grace of God. As much as we would like to put conditions on God or on our relationship with God, it is by grace that we live in this relationship. I did nothing and neither did you. God is always the actor in the question of salvation. The Lutheran note in the Christian symphony is always grace.

Too often we forget verse 10. "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."

We live by grace so that we might live as God has created us. We are to be good stewards of creation because we have been saved by grace. We are to care for the widow, orphan and immigrant because we have been saved by grace. We carry one another's burdens because we have been saved by grace.

God is among us through Jesus. This Jesus calls his followers to pick up the cross and follow him. Follow him into the messy places in our world where he is already doing his work of grace.



Too often our debates are not about how we have been living in God's grace so that we might serve. We like the grace, but we shy away from the service. We have been saved for a purpose. In Jesus God is reconciling the world to God. That is now our work too.

ELCA Good Gifts is a creative way for you to support the work we are called to do in the world. You can choose from more than 50 gifts that will change at least three lives: the life of the person helped by your gift, the life of your friend or loved one, and your own. Visit www.elca.org/goodgifts to learn more.

Reprinted from "The Spirit", December 2011

Installation This Saturday at Our Saviour's Lutheran, Bellingham

Pastor Joel Langholz will be installed this Saturday, December 10 at Our Saviour's Lutheran in Bellingham at 1 pm. Bishop Boerger will participate



and there will be a reception following. You are cordially invited to join the members of Our Saviour's and the rostered leaders of the Whatcom Cluster as they celebrate their new pastor and colleague and welcome Joel's family.

Advent & Christmas 2011

Wednesday, December 7, 6:30pm

Christmas Ships Party at the Helde's

(Bring beverage and food to share)

Sunday, December 11, Advent III

Sankta Lucia Celebration

Festive Scandinavian Coffee Hour

Holy Communion 10:00 AM only!

E.

<u>Special Congregation Meeting</u>
To vote on our Pastoral Candidate
Following the 10:00 AM Service

Sunday, December 18, Advent IV

Children's Christmas Pageant

Holy Communion 8:15 & 10:00 AM Service

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve

Holy Communion 5:00 PM Family Service

Holy Communion 10:30 PM Festival

Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day

Holy Communion, 10:00 AM

Advent Has Been Happening!

Saturday, December 3 was the Annual Swedish Pancake Breakfast at MLC. Here are some of the workers.



On Sunday, December 4, MLC was visited by St. Nicholas who gave gifts to the children and a blessing to all.



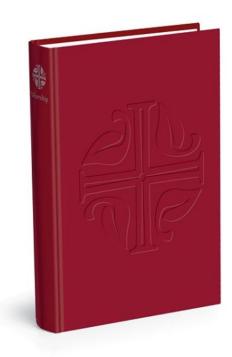
The New Hymnbook Project!

After much discussion, it was decided by the MLC worship and music committee, and approved by the Church Council, that we would like to find a way to purchase pew copies of the latest ELCA hymnal that was created in 2006. We have been using the music in our printed bulletins so it would be really great to get them for our pews as well. It is called Evangelical Lutheran Worship book or ELW.

The first hymnal book I remember is the red hymnal published in 1958! Yes, I am OLD! I am sure some people remember a brown hymnal; and, if you had a mother like I did, you had many hymn books in your home that came from other sources. In 1978, the green hymnal "Lutheran Book of Worship" (LBW) was introduced to unite the Lutheran synods, including the ALC and the LCA. It also included many Missouri Synod hymns, even though they eventually did not join the project. In the green book, many hymns were rewritten so that they were more easily sung by those with lower voice register and were written with slightly different harmonies. It took church members a while to get used to the green book. In 1995, the small blue "With One Voice" (WOV) hymnal was developed to augment the green hymnal with more contemporary songs and hymns.

Then, in 2006, the national church assembled a new book to lead our worship. It was a five-year project that incorporated input and evaluation from many across the country. A call went out to submit forms listing what hymns should be included. Again, people, like my Mom, spent many hours going through numerous hymnals to give the committee their thoughts and comments. The completed forms were evaluated. Also a series of provisional resources called "Renewing Worship" were produced with post-publishing review and evaluation was sought. Ann Simonson had these texts; and, I am sure she was asked for her input. The reviewers were made up of 62 individuals including Bishops, Church Council members, teachers, theologians and Deans of every ELCA seminary. The new hymnal was then produced for use in leading our Lutheran worship. We have been using this book in the last year in our printed bulletin. The liturgy we use during the year comes from the ELW and hymns that are printed in our bulletin are often from the new burgundy ELW hymnal. Next month, I will share information about the content of the ELW.

If you have any questions or would like to see a pew copy of the ELW just ask me. The choir has copies they have been using. *Celeste Stubbs*



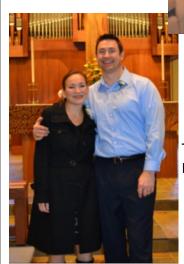
In the News

New members were welcomed through either transfer or Affirmation of Baptism on November 13th. The new members are:



Keith (ret. Pastor) & Georgene Swenson

Janna and James Wagar (daughter and son-in-law of the Swensons) and their children, Avery, Hayden & Ella



Tamackie & Tim Bechtold

Irene Dunbar was also welcomed. She was not officially on our role even though she has been active in the church for years.

1% FOR MAGNOLIA LUTHERAN?

Magnolia Thriftway Grocery Store generously donates to Magnolia Lutheran 1% of the totals of receipts for purchases at their store. This money goes to replenish and update our music collection and supplies. So if you shop at Thriftway, please:

- (1) SAVE and turn in your receipts via the box on the counter, across from the church office.
- (2) ASK your neighbors to save and give you their receipts
- (3) THANK the Thriftway personnel for helping Magnolia Lutheran when/if you are shopping there
- (4) KEEP on cooking!!

And, THANK YOU!

Elsie Simon and Ann Simonson

The Market Street Singers

The Market Street Singers includes MLC members Barbara Helde, Elsie Simon and Russ Long. Join them on Saturday, December 10th for a Holiday performance at Ballard First Lutheran Church.



Around the Parish

- **Choir Rehearsals** continue on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. Come and sing.
- **Bible Study** with Pastor Stensby in the library on Tuesdays, at 10am and at 6:30pm.
- **Decorating for Christmas** Join the fun on Sunday, December 18th following the 10am worship service to help decorate the church for Christmas.



During the coming Christmas season,

May you be blessed...

With the Spirit of the Season,

which is Peace,

The Gladness of the Season,

which is Hope,

And the Heart of the Season,

which is Love.





December Birthdays

12/1 - Dianne Spatz

12/8 - Margaret Price

12/8 - Nathan Watson

12/11 - Matthew Deehring

12/17 - Kenneth Kack

12/17 - Jamie Balder

12/19 - David Moussette

12/20 - Maryse La Russa

12/20 - Angus Dillon

12/21 - Joy Carpine-Cazzanti

12/24 - Kris Muramoto

12/26 - Syrene Forsman

12/30 - Jaime Pollock

Remember, if it's your birthday but you're not on the list, then we don't know that its your birthday. Let us know so we can add it to the list and wish you a Happy Birthday!

TEACH THE CHILDREN

This is how it happened...I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree.

He placed his finger over his mouth so I would not cry out. "What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked up in my throat, and I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. Gone was the eager, boisterous soul we all know.

He then answered me with a simple statement. "TEACH THE CHILDREN!"

I was puzzled; what did he mean? He anticipated my question, and with one quick movement brought forth a miniature toy bag from behind the tree. As I stood bewildered, Santa said, "Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. The meaning that now-a-days Christmas has forgotten."



Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a FIR TREE and placed it before the mantle.

"Teach the children that the pure green color of the stately fir tree remains green all year round, depicting the everlasting hope of mankind, all

the needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of man's thoughts turning toward heaven."

He again reached into his bag and pulled out a brilliant STAR.

"Teach the children that the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Savior for the world, and the star was the sign of fulfillment of His promise."



He then reached into his bag and pulled out a CANDLE.

"Teach the children that the candle symbolizes that Christ is the light of the world, and when we see this great light we are reminded of He who displaces the darkness."

Once again he reached into his bag and removed a **WREATH** and placed it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the wreath symbolizes the real nature of love. Real love never ceases. Love is one continuous round of affection."



He then pulled from his bag an ornament of himself.

"Teach the children that I, Santa Clause symbolize the generosity and good will we feel during the month of December."



X

He then brought out a **HOLLY LEAF**.

"Teach the children that the holly plant represents immortality. It represents the crown of thorns worn by our Savior. The red holly represents the blood shed by Him."

Next he pulled from his bag a GIFT and said, "Teach the children that God so loved the world that HE gave HIS begotten SON..." "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."



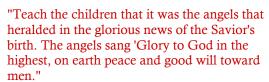
"Teach the children that the wise men bowed before the Holy BABE and presented HIM with gold, frankincense and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit of the wise men."



Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a CANDY CANE and hung it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the candy cane represents the shepherds' crook. The crook on the staff helps to bring back strayed sheep to the flock. The candy cane is the symbol that we are our brother's keeper."

He reached in again and pulled out an ANGEL.







Suddenly I heard a soft twinkling sound, and from his bag he pulled out a BELL.

"Teach the children that as the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring mankind to the fold. The bell symbolizes guidance and return."

Santa looked back and was pleased. He looked back at me and I saw that the twinkle was back in his eyes. He said,

"Remember, teach the children the true meaning of Christmas and do not put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant of the One that is, and I bow down to worship HIM, our LORD, our GOD."

Servants for December

Sunday, December 11 - 3rd Sunday in Advent

Assisting Minister—Beth Harwood

Lector—Beth Harwood

Acolyte—10:00 AM—Gabby Campbell

Altar Guild—Irene & Russ Long

Ushers—Tom Muramoto

Counters—John Valiton

Coffee Hour—Fellowship Committee

Flowers—Evergreens

Sunday, December 18 - 4th Sunday in Advent

Assisting Minister—Kimberly Brangwin

Lector—Elsie Simon

Acolyte—10:00 AM—Emma Simonson

Altar Guild-Caroline Alabach & Jeanne Moussette

Ushers—Beth Harwood & Tom Muramoto

Counters—Todd Glockley

Coffee Hour—Fellowship Committee

Flowers—Evergreens

Sunday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

Assisting Minister—5pm-Brian Reierson, 10:30pm-Alice Pease

Lector—5pm -Thor Sigmar, 10:30pm-Jeanne Moussette

Acolyte—Samantha Scheiber

Altar Guild-Caroline Alabach & Jeanne Moussette

Ushers—Beth Harwood & Tom Muramoto

Flowers—Evergreens & Pointsettias

Sunday, December 25 - Christmas Day

Assisting Minister—Deborah Moser-Donlen

Lector—Linda Tabor

Acolyte—10:00 AM—Helena Harris

Altar Guild—Kay Kurtzweg & Kathleen Brose

Ushers—Tom Muramoto & Beth Harwood

Counters—Donna Hegstrom

Coffee Hour—Fellowship Committee

Flowers—Pointsettias

Sunday, January 1 - 1 Sunday after Christmas

Assisting Minister—Celeste Stubbs

Lector—Kay Kurtzweg

Acolyte—10:00 AM—Kristjan Sigmar

Altar Guild—Kay Kurtzweg & Kathleen Brose

Ushers—Bob Mayoue

Counters—Mark Kelly

Coffee Hour—Fellowship Committee

Flowers—Pointsettias



Please use this list as a bookmark and keep the following in your prayers:

Pam Baumler, friend of Beth Harwood

Lucile Bennett

Mana Cazzanti

Chris Cross at home.

John Cross at home.

Myron Cross, with heart issues.

Dorothy Fribrock

Milt Furness, friend of Linda Norby

Kathi Goertzen

Mat Hale, friend of John & Mo Nagy

Bob Harris

Ron Hobbs

Barb Haro

Irene Holroyd

Ginny Joiner, with daughter Jeanne Moussette.

Nick Jones

Cliff Kurtzweg

Lee Lubin, at home.

Bob McIntosh, at home.

Judy Maleng

Kassandra Mirosh, cousin of Victoria Watson,

Dave Muramoto (father of Tom Muramoto)

Mary Muramoto (mother of Tom Muramoto)

Alice Ness

Mary Obrastoff (friend of Kay Kurtzweg).

Laurie Pickering

Mark Reiff

Geri Russell, quilter at MLC

Mary Shelton, Pastor Kragthorpe's daughter

Sue Soderstrom, Susan Dively's mother

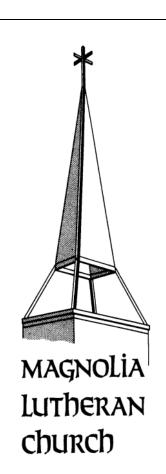
Georgene Swenson

Keith Swenson

Carmel Tanner, friend of John & Mo Nagy

Frank & Helen Wicklund, at home.

Sally Winkel



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Members of the Congregation

Pastor:

The Rev. Doug Stensby

Director of Music:

Ann Simonson

Organist:

Ann Simonson

Parish Administrator:

Deborah Ramsey

Caretaker:

Mara Meloy

Nursery Attendant:

Amie Cuhaciyan

Newsletter Editor:

Russ Long, email: Russell_Long@msn.com

Youth Director—LEAP & VERGE

Worship Services:

Sundays

8:15 AM, Holy Communion 10:00 AM, Holy Communion Nursery Care Provided

Education Hour:

Sundays

9:00 AM (for all ages) Adult Sunday School

Fellowship:

Sundays, 11:00 AM

Youth:

Sundays, 5:00 PM Verge for middle school 7:00 PM , LEAP for high school at Magnolia Presbyterian Church

The Magnolia Lutheran is published the first Wednesday of each month to nurture our members and extend the ministry of our congregation.

Publication deadline is the 25th of the preceding month.

Magnolia Lutheran Church 2414 31st Avenue West Seattle,WA98199-3398

Time Value - Mailed 12/9/2011
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED