

Ponderings of Pastor Paul

Hold on to your hats. The Christmas rush has begun! It seems each year merchants are pushing the Christmas sales sooner and sooner. Last year one retail chain began their "After-Christmas Sales" before December 25th. As stores are opening on the evening of Thanksgiving, "Black Friday" is creeping into "Black Thanksgiving Day?" That just sounds wrong. And yet, in a capitalistic consumebased economy, retailers know if they do not compete for the limited dollars and energy of consumers, they will be left behind. And so they are looking for every way possible to market and expand their sales.

What I find puzzling in this mix is not the Christmas frenzy, but that after it is over there seems to be a growing disappointment in Christmas. I have no data to support such a statement, and maybe it is my own projection -(If so stop reading now and go to the inside pages!) But it feels as if we are doing more and more for Christmas and enjoying it less and less.

Ever since I was a child I have heard Pastors rallying their congregations around the "True Meaning of Christmas" sermons. If we just put Jesus back at the center then our satisfaction in the season will increase. As right as that may be, it has been very ineffective in stemming the tide of Christmas frenzy.

So what are we, the people of God, to do in this frenzy?

We have turned Christmas into a time of fulfilling "Wish Lists." We learn this early-on as we write our wish list letters to Santa. It continues with: where do we want to celebrate Christmas? Who is going to cook what? How do we keep your in-law's Christmas traditions, and my parents, and establish our own? How will we keep Christmas when our loved one is no longer with us? The "Wish List" questions seem infinite, and we do a remarkable job fulfilling them. The problem is, fulfilling wish lists is not overly satisfying, and at times can seem like obligations and duties.

So what are we, the people of God, to do in this frenzy?

When left without any clear answers, I like to go back to Biblical stories. What struck me as I reread them again this year, is that when God visits Mary, God does not ask her what she would like for Christmas; her wish list, if you will. Instead God gives her a vision of what her life will be as she gives birth to God's love in this world, at this time, and in this place.

When God comes to Joseph, God does not ask



what Joseph would like for Christmas. Instead, God give him a dream - a dream in which he sees a life without fear; a life free to participate and help grow the love of God to which Mary will give birth. On the first Christmas, Mary and Joseph were not asked to create a wish list, but were given a dream and a vision list from God; a dream and a vision of what their lives would be like with the love of God present in the form of Jesus. God's dream and vision became the center of their lives.

In the midst of this year's Christmas frenzy, pause for a moment and ask yourself, what is my dream list, my vision list for my life? I think you will find your dream and vision list is given to you just as God gave the vision and the dream to Mary and Joseph. And it is the same dream and vision, that we are chosen to give birth to the love of God, in this world, and at this time, and in this place. As this vision and dream becomes the center of our lives, then we go about fulfilling our wish lists in a Christmas frenzy. Yet, in the midst of the frenzy we will experience something more. We will touch the love of God that is eternal. We will know the hope that God continues to come to us and dwells in our midst. We will know the joy of God's presence not only in our happiness but also in our sorrow. We will experience the peace that comes from knowing God's word is ours, and nothing on earth, or heaven or under the earth, will stop God from fulfill his promise.

When we keep our dream and vision list at the center of our lives, then, even if our Christmas wish list does not come to completion, we will know the love, hope, joy, and peace of the Christmas season.

How can that be a disappointing Christmas?

In Christ's aloha and love,

Pastor Paul



That the Craft Fair was a huge success in spite of the weather and all the other activities going on that day.

A huge thank you goes to **NOREEN JAVINAR** for coordinating the effort, the church Halau for providing a wonderful chili and rice lunch, the Dorcas Society for the quilts, and all those who brought baked goods. All totaled almost \$1,200 was raised. Half of the proceeds go to Mobil Munchies, and the other half to the Youth. Mahalo . . .

That the front landscaping for the church looks incredible. Thanks to **JERRY & LAURA NISHEK**, all the volunteers, and to **KAUAI NURSERY**, for making it possible! The first impression as people arrive at our church is fantastic . . .

That a thank you goes to **OBIE OBENAUR**, for our new stop sign when leaving the parking lot. Visitors are taking pictures of it, and I believe you will see them popping up in Lutheran churches around the country . . .

That you are asked to keep **JUANICE BIEDERMANN** in your love and prayers as she continues with treatments on Oahu . . .

That a thank you goes to the **DORCAS SOCIETY** for the Hawaiian quilts that are making their way to the flood victims in North Dakota . . .

That it is good to have **CARLA BRIGGS** moving back to Kauai from Dallas. We continue to hold her in our love and prayers . . .

That we say aloha to **MR. WATANABE**, and to **JT & JAYDEN LEWIS**, (Peggy's grandsons) as they move to the mainland. They go with our love and prayers . . .

That a thank you goes to **MICHELLE, MICHAEL, RACHAEL, AND LARRY DRESSLER**, for organizing the CHRISTMAS BOX effort for our congregation. Over 80 boxes were filled and are being sent with our prayers to an orphanage in Nigeria. . .

That we also remember and pray for **MR. KU-BOYAMA**, as he continues in long-term care at Wilcox . . .

That we are grateful **LUKE HACKER** is doing much better after being attacked on Oahu. How quickly life can change. We keep him in our prayers . . .

That **ANGELA KIRCHNER** came through screening test with flying colors. Eight years now! Thank you for your prayers . . .

That **CHRIS & ARAINA DANNER** were united in marriage in our church on Nov. 11th. It was good to have them back from Barrel, Alaska, and for such a joyous event . . .

That **OKTOBERFEST** in November was great! Thanks to all those who help with food, the sausages, and special thanks to the musicians who entertained (it is the best Polka Band on Kauai—even if it is the only Polka Band on Kauai!), and to **THRIVENT** for funding the event . . .

That **LAUREN CLAYPOOLE** was elected Student Body Class President for Island School, and **JOY** came in 14th out of 160 participants in the State Cross Country Tournament. Congratulations . . .

That maholo goes to **PASTOR DICK** for leading the worship while Pastor Paul was at the Theological Conference in California. He is an incredible gift to our congregation !!!

Hopping for more scoops,

Luther



Dear Lihue Lutheran Ohana,

Please know that as I celebrate Thanksgiving this year, you are certainly included in the things for which I am grateful. Your continued commitment to

serving your Lord here at Lihue Lutheran enables me to do this job which I love so. For our partnership in ministry, I give you my thanks.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Paul

Also, this Sunday, **November 20th**, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving as part of our worship services. To decorate the altar, it is asked if you have any fruits, vegetables, or flowers that are ripe and blooming, please bring them to the church by Saturday morning. They will be used for our service, and then shared with whoever can make use them afterwards.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

2012 ELCA Youth Gathering

"citizens with the saints"

New Orleans, Louisiana

Our Youth are raising funds to attend the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Needless to say, for us on Kauai there is an additional financial challenge to this endeavor, but the rewards are enormous. So far the youth have raised half the money to attend, but are still in need of help. There are four ways you can aid them in their efforts:

First, if you have frequent flier miles you will not be using, you can donate them to the Youth Group. Cheryl Claypoole is helping gather the miles into an account and will be helping with the airline reservations!

Second, enjoy the best Macadamia Nuts in Hawaii. Sioux and Stewart Mackenzie have donated their harvest to the Youth. A 2.5 pound bag is \$5 and with a nut cracker (one that really works on mac nuts!) \$20.

Third, Obie Obenaur has donated a beautiful piece of glass art. For a \$10.00 donation, you could be the owner, and we will ship it to the mainland!

Finally, we continue to recycle. If you have Hawaii 5 plastic, bottles or cans, please bring them by the church. They are collected behind the garage, the kids separate, and Obie takes them to the recyclers. A word for help, someone is taking our recyclables before we can get them redeemed. Any suggestions on how to help them stop? Thanks for your love and help for our Youth!

Odds and Ends

Congregational Meeting: this Sunday, Nov.20th at 9:30 am to approve the budget for 2012. Also, if you would like to run for church council please talk with Obie Obenaur.

Holiday Dinners: Once again Lihue Lutheran will be helping the hunger of our Island during the Holidays. If you can make a donation, it will be used to purchase debit cards at the grocery stores of Kauai.

Organ Donors: during the month of November we are asked to give thanks by focusing on how we give. One valuable way to give is by being an organ donor. Information on this important ministry is in the church pews and if you have questions, feel free to contact: Denese Alcott. Mahalo

Advent - Christmas Schedule

Church Decorating:

Our church looks so wonderful on Christmas Eve, but only because of the willingness of so many to decorate. Come and join us:

Saturday, December 10th. 8:00 am

Advent Soup Supper

In our preparation for Christmas it is important to prepare spiritually. Pastor Paul will lead a short discussion on the "Messianic Texts of the Old Testament".

Wednesday, December 14th

6:00 pm—Soup Supper

6:30 pm Discussion

7:30 pm Evening Prayer

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

3:00 pm, Service of Carols and Scripture

This informal service is designed especially for those who do not like to drive or go out at night.

7:30 pm, Family Candlelight Service

This service has a special focus on the children and youth of our church Ohana as they lead the service and hear a "Christmas Story".

9:00 pm Congregational Christmas Dinner

Share Christmas dinner with your church family, and invite friends and visitors on the Island. Ham and turkey are provided, and, if possible, you are asked to bring a side dish to share!

11:00 pm Luther's Carol Service of Holy Communion & Candlelight.

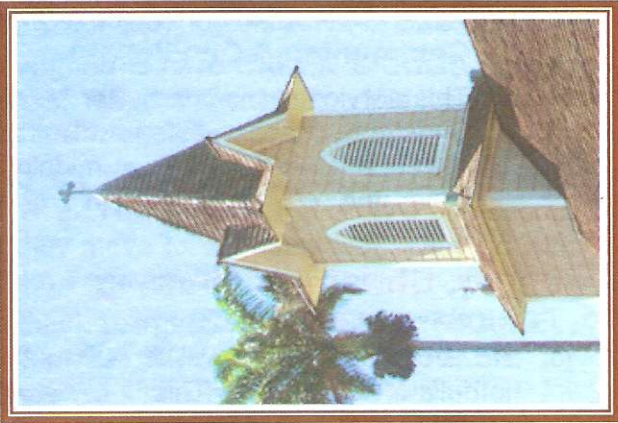
This service is modeled after Martin Luther's Christmas Mass. Filled with tradition and beauty the service ends at midnight, and we leave the church in the joy of Christmas morning.

Sunday, Christmas Morning

One Service only! 9:00 am

Ever so often, it works out that Christmas falls on a Sunday. This is the year! To welcome in our Christmas morning, there will be only one service at 9:00 am. Please help us get the word out to members and visitors alike. It would be a shame if people came to Christmas worship at a time when we were not planning a service.

Lihue Lutheran Church, ELCA



Serving Our Lord and Kaua'i since 1881

*Remembering Our Past . . . Renewing Our Future
Mai Poina Ka Mole . . . E Ho'omaka Hou Ka Hana Mua*

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