
AUKE TALK

December 2009 Edition

THE PASTOR'S PEN

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More than 1500 years ago, Leo the Great (400 – 461), one of the most important Christian leaders of the early church, wrote these stirring Christmas words:

Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no one free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice – seeing the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad – receiving the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage – being summoned to life...

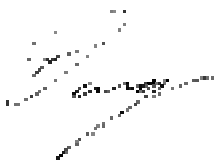
Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.

Rejoice, Leo the Great tells us... because the Lord frees us from sin and death. "Saints, sinners, pagans"... all of us may sing with joy because Jesus Christ has come into our lives and given us eternal happiness. What we were before Jesus came does not matter. What counts is that Jesus has arrived to swallow up death and give life. We do not need to be sad or fearful. This is refreshing, wonderful news. Rejoice.

Moreover, remember your dignity and live courageously... because, as the ancient saint reminds us, you – Christian – "share in God's nature." Christ is our head, we are his body; we are one with him. Do not forget, Leo exhorts us; Christmas brings us "into the light of God's kingdom." So when you feel darkness close in... temptation, discouragement, fear, bitterness... take courage and remember your dignity. Jesus has arrived and you are aligned with Christ. Do not forget. You are a child of God, a child of light. Live with dignity and courage.

I pray Jesus's arrival overwhelms you with joy and dignity and courage this Christmas season. Turn to Jesus; you belong to him. Fear, sadness, darkness have lost their power. Christmas means we live in light and joy.

Merry Christmas!



ASSOCIATED REMARKS

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JOY TO THE WORLD! THE LORD IS COME!

Is it the lights, the music, the parties, the feasts, the gifts, the friends, the family that make this season one of joy? If you watch commercials you might think so. If you pay any attention at all to how our North American culture celebrates the Holiday Season it would be easy to think that joy comes from what you get and consume. However, the biblical picture of joy does not portray us as the consumers, but as the consumed. As Isaiah tells us in the last half of verse 11 in chapter 51, "Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

Joy is something so great that it cannot be contained in trinkets, events, ceremonies, other people or even in us. Joy is from God. Joy is powerful. There is no pain or sorrow greater than joy. But sometimes, and perhaps at no time more than in the face of death, joy seems impossible. Yet, there it is. Many people experiencing deep grief at the loss of a loved one have spoken and written about the fact that there is an even deeper well of joy that waters their soul in these desert places.

It is part of the mystery of joy, part of what separates it from happiness and general jolliness that it does not depend on only good or enjoyable circumstances. Nor does it seek to avoid pain or escape sorrow. Rather, joy springs from the very pit of our deepest human sorrow. As human beings we were created in the image of God for the purpose of fellowship with God in worship and enjoyment. When human beings turned from God and fell into sin, sorrow and death came with it. Our deepest human sorrow, the source of all our other sorrow, is the loss of this fellowship with our Maker. It is into the very bottom of this pit that God sends his only Son, Jesus Christ.

We celebrate the great miracle this time of year that God in his grace came down from heaven, incarnate in human flesh, straight into the pit, to retrieve the people he loved and deliver them from their sin and sorrow and even death itself. Only in Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully human, is fellowship with God our Father restored. At the point of our deepest sorrow, joy is born.

The Lord is come!

*No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.*

There is no sorrow greater than joy.

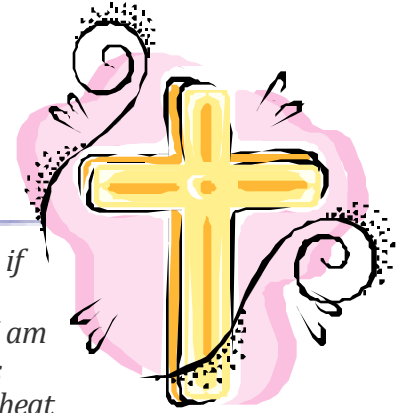
*...who made a road in the depths of the sea
so that the redeemed might cross over?
Those the Lord has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Isaiah 50:10b-11a*

Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice!



JOYFUL NOISE

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“The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all: ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them.”
(Luke 3: 15-18)

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST’S BIRTH

Invite a friend, family, or stranger to Christmas Eve services this year

Have you heard the Good News of the birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Do you believe? If so, you know that your sins are forgiven and that you have an eternal life with Christ to look forward to. Has this information transformed your mind, giving you pause to make decisions that are less worldly and rooted more in faithfulness to your Father? In times of bounty, do you praise Him? In times of hardship, do you praise Him and find comfort in His promises?

If any of these things are true in your life, even if a work in progress, you have been given the Greatest Gift of all. In this season of gift-giving, in addition to (or instead of) the fruitcake or bath salts, give the gift of Christ’s love. It might sound crazy or even scary, but can you imagine the impact that gift could have on another person?

Give the gift of Christ’s compassion:

Put new mittens and hats on the tree in Smith Hall, drop off canned goods for Love INC at the church office, or donate new coats and toys at various charity boxes around town.

Give the gift of Christ’s love:

When your child, spouse, or co-worker angers you, resist the earthly temptation to react badly and instead, choose love by taking a deep breath, smiling, and acting graciously.

Give the gift of Christ’s consistency:

Stick to your values, even when no one is looking. If you profess it but don’t do it, then it’s probably not what you really believe.

Give the gift of Christ’s patience:

That checker at Fred Meyer is probably having a hard time, too.

And, most importantly, give the gift of the knowledge of Christ’s gift to us:

Invite a friend, family member, or stranger to worship with us on Christmas Eve! Our family-friendly service is at 5:00pm, traditional candlelight services at 7 and 9, and candlelight communion service at 11. For those grappling with loss, we are also holding Longest Night services for kids at 5:45 and adults at 7:00pm this Sunday, Dec 20.

Visit www.chapelbythelake.org for printable business cards about our Christmas Eve services that you can hand out to those you meet during the next two weeks. We’ll also have some in the Narthex of each sanctuary for you to distribute. Share the Good News of Jesus Christ! It’s at the top of everyone’s list this season, whether they know it or not.

THE "L" TRAIN UPDATE

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TO SAVE A LIFE

Jake and Roger grew up as best friends. But in high school, Jake became a star athlete who has it all: a college scholarship and the perfect girl, and ideal life that comes at the exclusion of his childhood friend. Meanwhile, Roger no longer fits in anywhere and becomes tired of always being pushed aside. He makes a tragic move that spins Jake's world out of control. As Jake searches for answers, he begins a journey that will change his life forever.

This indie movie about the real-life challenges of teens and their choices was written by Jim Britts, a seasoned youth pastor combining his film degree with a passion to reach youth. At its core, *To Save A Life* focuses on universal themes and issues critical to today's young people:

Themes: Acceptance, Choices, Consequences, Real Life, Hurt, Love

Critical Issues: Social Divisions, School Violence, Cutting, Suicide, Underage Drinking, Teen Pregnancy, Divorce (The movie has a PG-13 rating: for mature thematic elements involving teen suicide, teen drinking, some drug content, disturbing images and sexuality.)

To Save A Life shows in practical, authentic ways how every action we take has a ripple-effect on others. Sometimes these actions are unconscious, but too often they are selfish and empty, and their ripples have painful consequences. Every person has the power to turn the tide by choosing to remain aware and reach out – especially to those hurting on the fringes of teen culture.

This film comes out in theatres January 22, 2010. However, because of Juneau's size it is not guaranteed to come here. Local Youth Leaders and churches are working together to bring this movie to Juneau. Please pray that it comes to Juneau!

I had the opportunity to watch a pre-showing of this movie, and I was moved by the powerful story. This is a movie about real life, and it makes you think about the choices you make. You can watch the trailer online. Please be in prayer that this movie will change the lives of young people all around the world.

If everything goes according to plan tickets will be on sale soon. This movie is not only for teenagers, but for parents. It is eye opening to see what teens are facing in the world today.

If you are interested in the movie, or if you would like more information, you can visit the website: www.tosavealifemovie.com or contact Jessica by email: jreighard@chapelbythelake.org or by phone: 907-723-0090.

Thanks,

Jessica Reighard

TERMS TO LEARN

Note: While Christians should strive to communicate Gospel truth in everyday language (rather than “Christianese”) so that it can be understood, it is also true that our communication and understanding is diminished when we avoid learning and using some words that may not be in common use outside of their Christian context. And if we don’t learn them, how can we explain the concepts contained within these terms to our children and our neighbors? Each issue of Auke Talk, the Christian Discipleship Ministry Team (CDMT) will feature a term every month for you to learn, explain, discuss and share with your family, study group, friends, and neighbors.

This Month: The Glory of God

(From *The Reformation Study Bible ESV*, Ligonier Ministries 2005, p. 1148)

God’s goal is His glory, but this needs careful explanation, for it is easily misunderstood. It points to a purpose, not of divine egoism, but of divine love. Certainly God asks to be praised for His praiseworthiness and exalted for His greatness and goodness; He asks to be appreciated for what He is. But the glory that is His goal is a two-sided, two-stage relationship: on the one side He reveals His glory in acts of free generosity, and on the other, His people respond with adoration, giving Him glory with thanksgiving for what they have seen and received. Human beings were made for this reciprocal fellowship of love, and Christ’s redemption makes it possible for those who had fallen. Human nature is fulfilled through seeing God’s glory and returning praise to Him, just as God has pleasure in revealing His goodness to those who receive it (Zeph 3:14-17).

“Glory” in the Old Testament is associated with value, riches, splendor, and dignity. When Moses asked to see God’s glory, God proclaimed to Moses His name; that is, He revealed to Moses something of His nature, character, and power (Ex 33:18-34:7). Accompanying the proclamation was an awe-inspiring physical manifestation, a bright cloud like a burning fire (Ex 24:17). This glory of God’s presence is often called the “Shekinah” or God’s “Shekinah glory.” It appeared at significant moments as a sign of God’s active presence (Ex 33:22; 34:4; 16:10; 24:17; 40:34, Lev 9:23-24; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezek 1:28; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4; 11:22-23; Matt 17:5; Luke 2:9; Acts 1:9; 1 Thes 4:17; Rev 1:7). New Testament writers proclaim that the glory of God is now revealed in Jesus Christ (John 1:14-18; 2 Cor 4:3-6; Heb 1:1-3).

God is glorified in the acts of salvation, because they exhibit His incomparable condescension, His inexhaustible love, and His limitless power. “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (Jonah 2:9), and those He saves have contributed nothing to their salvation except their need (Is 42:8; 48:11). The praise for salvation belongs to no one except God. This is why Reformation theology was so insistent on the principle, “Glory to God *alone*” (*solī Deo Gloria*), and why we need to maintain that principle with equal zeal today.

ADDITIONAL TERMS TO LEARN

To read past “Terms to Learn” articles, please see our ever-growing archive of monthly newsletters on the church’s website at www.chapelbythelake.org/resources.html. You will also find digital (MP3) recordings of recent sermons, descriptions of the monthly devotionals that we have available (print & CD), and a series of articles entitled *Ten Ways Modern Culture is Different Because of John Calvin*. We are continually adding more materials for you to read and listen to, so check back often.

Be sure to visit the homepage, www.chapelbythelake.org, to check out upcoming Chapel events, take a moment to meet the staff on the staff’s page, or wander on over to the “Online Giving” page to sign up for automatic tithing via PayPal (use your account or your credit card). We always welcome feedback, so you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Donovan in the church office at 789-7592.

NOTES FROM SESSION:

Session met Nov. 19th for the regular monthly meeting with 10 elders present and 2 excused. Rev. Dr. Dye led the devotions from I Cor. 10:31 where Paul teaches we do everything for the glory of God.

There were reports from Rev. Dye, Rev. Hackel, Christian Discipleship Ministry Team, Evangelism, Long Range Planning, Personnel and Music and Worship.

Harvey Knuth reported that the excavation project behind the sanctuary is completed; the final version of the 2010 budget will be presented at the Dec. Session meeting for approval; and that an "official position and response" will be prepared to be sent to UAS regarding the proposed changes to the campus.

Session called the regular congregational meeting for Nov. 29th with a dessert potluck at 6pm. Session adjourned at 8:45pm.

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the congregational meeting on November 29th, members voted overwhelmingly in support of securing financing to move ahead with the remodel and expansion of the Narthex and Smith Hall. We plan to start the project this spring. Stay tuned for continuing developments.

FLOORING PROJECT - NURSERY, TODDLER, PRESCHOOL ROOMS

Commencing Saturday morning, December 26th, we will be replacing the flooring in the Nursery/Toddler/Preschool rooms. "Many hands make light work" so volunteers to help remove the old carpet tiles and put down the new flooring are needed. Please call Harvey at 789-7592 for additional info.

During the project the nursery will be relocated to Room 201 (the View Room). Affected dates include December 27th and January 3rd.

GENERAL GIVING UPDATE

As you likely know, each year we prepare an Operating Budget to address anticipated expenses for the upcoming year. The budget is based on the general offering of our members. We will be publishing a monthly update from now on. Through November, our budget anticipated receiving \$653,538 and our actual receipts were \$655,175.

CALVARY GREETINGS!

A Christmas greeting from our Senegal partner Eloi Dogue. Rev. Dogue is pastor of Keur Jamm Church in Dakar, Senegal, one of the only Christian churches in a city that is almost entirely Muslim. These words are his own; English is his third language:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus be multiply to you and your family.

Sir, as the year is rolling gently over we want to size this opportunity to say once again thank you for your love, concerns, prayers and sacrificial giving (supports) without which it could have very difficult for us to remain focus in this great business on enthroning Him among the unchurched and unreached nations.

May your good work never be in vain, in Jesus name! We have received all that you sent and have used it as designated.

For this season our prayers for you are:

- ▶ May God grant you the light in christmas, which is faith;
- ▶ the warmth of christmas, which is love;
- ▶ the radiance of christmas, which is purity;
- ▶ the righteousness of christmas, which is justice;
- ▶ the belief of christmas, which is the truth;
- ▶ the ALL of Christmas, which is CHRIST !!!!

Sir, Merry christmas and Happy new year 2010; With a heart full of thanks.

Yours in His vineyard
Eloi & Francisca DOGUE

NEW TO YOUR LIBRARY

Grief & Bereavement

- ▶ *101 Ways You Can Help* by Liz Aleshire (155.9 ALE)
- ▶ *Beyond Tears* (155.9 BEY)
- ▶ *Children Helping Children with Grief* by Beverly Chappell (155.9 CHA)
- ▶ *Life After Loss* by Bob Deits (155.9 DEI)
- ▶ *What Should I Say, What Can I Do?* by Rebecca Feldbaum (155.9 FEL)
- ▶ *Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One* by William Kroen (155.9 KRO)
- ▶ *A Parent's Guide to Raising Grieving Children* by Phyllis Silverman (155.9 SIL)
- ▶ *God, Are You There?* by Kay Arthur (220.8 ART)
- ▶ *Tear Soup* by Pat Schwiebert (E SCH)
- ▶ *When Someone Dies* by Sharon Greenlee (J 155.9 GRE)
- ▶ *What's Heaven?* by Maria Shriver (J 155.9 SHR)

Christmas & Advent

- ▶ *Simply Wait* by Pamela Hawkings (263 HAW)
- ▶ *The Advent Jesse Tree* by Dean Lambert (263 LAM)
- ▶ *Hurry Less, Worry Less at Christmastime* by Judy Christie (263.9 CHR)
- ▶ *The Promise of Christmas* by Peg Augustine (E AUG)
- ▶ *A Child is Born* by Mary Gran (J GRA)
- ▶ *Nighty Night, Baby Jesus* by Molly Idle (E IDL)
- ▶ *Seven Stories of Christmas Love* by Leo Buscaglia (E BUS)
- ▶ *The Forgotten Carols* by Michael McLean (J MCL)

Other New Additions

- ▶ *The Life of Jesus* by Julie Hogan (232.9 HOG)
- ▶ *Left to Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza (282 ILI)
- ▶ *Learn to Grow Old* by Paul Tournier (305.26 TOU)
- ▶ *The Blue Bottle Club* by Penelope Stokes (FIC STO)
- ▶ *Parables for Kids* by Danae Dobson, James Dobson (J 242.62 DOB)
- ▶ *John Calvin* by Simonetta Carr (J 912 CAL)

UPDATE ON ELAINE POWELL

While in Sitka this past October for the ordination of two of our Presbytery's Candidates for ministry, Elder and Deacon Peg Warren and Rev. Tracee Hackel visited Elaine Powell at the Sitka Pioneer Home. Elaine and Sugar (the dog) both like their new home very much. So far she has found only one other Bridge player, but enjoys many other activities the home offers and the friendly, helpful staff. Elaine was very grateful for the box of goodies the Wednesday morning women's Christ Care group sent and the other communications she has received from Chapel folks. Our brothers and sisters at Sitka First Presbyterian make sure that Elaine gets to church on Sundays (see picture). We are grateful to the Sitka church for welcoming her into their care and fellowship while she lives there.



ATTENTION WOMEN OF CHAPEL

Do you desire a deeper, more personal relationship with the Lord? Do you want an opportunity to become better acquainted with your sisters-in-Christ? Plan to join the ChapeLadies winter retreat January 29th and 30th, "Closer to God." Martha Zimmerman will lead us as we explore this relationship that the Lord desires with us. Watch for bulletin announcements and make your reservations for Friday night dinner, Saturday breakfast, and lunch. Overnight stay at the church is optional. There is no charge for this event.

RENEWAL BY THE LAKE

March 5th—7th, 2010

Renewal by the Lake is an annual “signature event” for the Chapel by the Lake congregation. Each year (usually in the late winter/early spring) we host a guest speaker to expound God’s Word to us and encourage us as disciples of Jesus Christ. Past Renewal speakers have included, among others, Kenneth Bailey, Eugene Peterson, Earl Palmer, and Tony Campolo. The outstanding preaching and teaching we receive at Renewal is augmented by a barbecue dinner, special music, and other activities.

About our Renewal Speaker

Internationally renowned theologian, author, and educator Dr. Marva J. Dawn serves as Teaching Fellow in Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Under *Christians Equipped for Ministry (CEM)*, she has preached and taught at seminaries, clergy conferences, churches, assemblies, and universities throughout the United States and Canada and in Australia, China and Hong Kong, England, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Madagascar, Mexico, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Singapore, and Scotland.

A scholar with four masters degrees and a Ph.D. in Christian Ethics and the Scriptures from the University of Notre Dame, Dr. Dawn is a popular preacher and speaker for people of all ages.

She is the author of numerous articles and over 20 books, several of which have won awards and/or been translated into Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and other languages. In her most recent book, *In the Beginning GOD*, released in 2009, Dawn applies a hermeneutic of adoration to the Genesis creation accounts, suggesting that a foundational trust in God’s steadfastness will result in an increased desire to worship God, while also accepting God’s mystery.

Marva and her husband Myron, a retired elementary school teacher, live in southwestern Washington State. Learn more about Marva Dawn’s ministry (and find an Advent meditation worth reviewing) at www.marvadawn.org.

CHILDREN’S LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IN THE LOG CHAPEL

Sunday, December 20th at 5:45pm

Special service for children age 3-13 (parents, grandparents, older siblings, caregivers welcome to attend). *Please bring a snack to share with others in Smith Hall after the service.*

We know that many families in our church family and community have been affected by the deaths of family members, and friends these past few months. We recognize that our children are grieving and asking many questions about death and grief and want to help their friends and family members who are sad. We want to take this opportunity to dedicate some time to talking with our children about a Christian understanding of death, grief, how to help others who are sad, and the great, sure hope of the resurrection we have in Jesus Christ. Several adults who care about the children in our congregation will be there to talk and listen to them. We will continue our children’s fellowship in Smith Hall while adults attend the Longest Night service in the Log Chapel at 7pm if they wish to do so. If you have any questions please contact Rev. Tracee Hackel via email, thackel@chapelbythelake.org, or call 789-7592 ext.225 (church) or 209-5879 (cell).

NEW YEARS DAY BALL

Let’s celebrate the beginning of 2010 by dusting off our dancing shoes. All ages and abilities of dancers welcome, no previous experience required. You are free to dress up as much as you like or dress down. The New Years Day Ball will run from 7-10PM in Smith Hall with plenty of time to dance, snack, socialize and have a festive 2010 picture taken. The High School Youth Group will provide refreshments for a donation.

