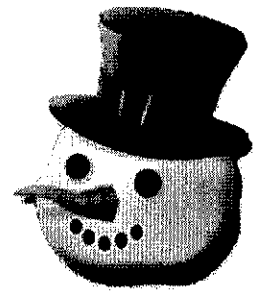


The Church Organ

January 2010/Volume 16 No. 1



From Your Pastor's Pen

God's Love for a New Year

"Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you."

(John 15:13-14 NIV)

Oh, the amazing and eternal love that God has for us! We ought to revel in this amazing love that was expressed with such great passion when Christ willingly and voluntarily laid it down for us that we might have new life in him.

We ought to daily ponder the greatness of this love and then, having considered it carefully, respond with true devotion to him. What keeps us from complete surrender to his will? What does the world have to offer that can even come close to competing with God's great love expressed through Christ's humble self-giving? How can we do less than to come under the full shelter of his love and respond with total abandon to the One who loved us so?

There is no greater expression of love than that someone lay down his life for his friends. This is true to human experience. If our

lives were preserved because a friend put himself in harm's way on our behalf, we would feel an obligation to live for his memory. How much more so then, ought we to live for Christ, and those for whom he died?

This is Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. He wrote, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." We are no longer to live for ourselves, but for Christ. As you know, that is very difficult for most to fulfill. Yet, it ought to be the easiest thing in the world to do if we properly understand what he has accomplished on our behalf. We should delight to do his will, and thereby prove ourselves to be his friends; because we are doing what he has commanded us to do.

"But what has he commanded us to do," you ask? That is not hard to find, for in the very context of the verse at the head of this article we read, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12). Do you find it intriguing that Jesus gave this command just before he spoke of the greater love of laying down one's life for a friend? I do!

I believe that this gives new light to the verses we have had on our banners throughout 2009. Remember what that verse has been teaching us over the last year? Let me remind you what it said; "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). Jesus showed us what love is, the greater kind of love, by laying down his life for us. Now, in obedience to his commandment in John 15:12, we are to love one another as he loved us. How did he love us? He laid down his life for us.

Therefore, to be obedient to the command of our Lord, we must act as he did, and lay down our lives for one another. Jesus laid aside his own will to do the will of the Father so that man might be redeemed

"We ought to daily ponder the greatness of this love and then, having considered it carefully, respond with true devotion to him."

and our sins atoned for. Now, in the example of his love, we lay aside our wills and do what is best for those around us. We look for needs in the lives of others, and setting ourselves aside, we give ourselves to the ministry of meeting these needs in others, in Jesus Name and in his example. Why? Because we understand that if Christ died for us, we died; and we are no longer living for ourselves, but for Christ who died for us. We now live to do his will,

(Continued on the back page.)



Branches on the Oak Lake Family Tree

in psychology and minoring in Spanish.

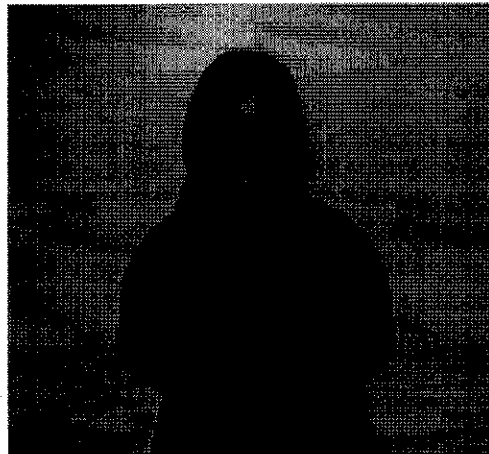
While Mary is a student, employment is not her top priority. However, during school holidays and in the summer, Mary works at Bed Bath & Beyond. Here she does cashier or customer service work.

Mary started playing the violin in the fourth grade and continued to do so through high school. She doesn't play as much as she did in high school, but she enjoys the opportunity that the orchestra gives her to help keep up her playing skills. When Mary was taking private lessons growing up, her entire repertoire had to be memorized. So she has dozens of songs that she can play at the drop of a hat. The biggest problem for her is choosing which one.

While growing up, Mary took several kinds of dance lessons; ballet, tap, hip hop, etc. Now she is only taking Irish Dancing lessons. It's very intense and challenging, but she has a lot of fun with it. Mary particularly enjoys the end of the year when recitals are held at the Lied Center.

Mary's other hobbies include reading, hanging out with friends, and sometimes playing video games. She owns over 400 books and she always can find more books that she would like to read. When Mary has a friend over, she likes sharing her "modest, but amazing movie collection."

One day during this past semester, Mary and her friend, Christine, walked downtown to the Dietze Music House. They decided to buy each other a ukulele on a whim. (A ukulele is a small guitar with four strings.) They are now trying to teach each other to play. Mary says that it has been an "interesting project."



If you are very observant, you may notice that Mary brings a Spanish/English Bible with her to church each Sunday. Each page has the Spanish scripture written on one side, and the English equivalent on the other. At times most of us find just speaking and understanding English to be a challenge, let alone Spanish.

(Continued on the back page.)

Many of us appreciate the ministry of our orchestra on Sunday mornings, but for Mary Reid it was major reason for her to begin attending Oak Lake. In September of 2008, Lisa Vance invited her to come to church with her. When Mary saw that we had an orchestra, she volunteered to join. We have been blessed with her musical abilities since then.

Mary moved to Lincoln when she was three years old with her parents and older sister. Mary attended Lincoln Christian School from kindergarten through the 5th grade. It was here that she became a believer. She credits LCS for helping her to become firmly rooted in her faith before she transferred to Lux Middle School. She graduated from Lincoln East High School in 2008. Mary is now attending UNL majoring

January 2010

Oak Lake Evangelical Free Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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THE BIRTH OF JESUS

LUKE 2:1-20

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B R Y A N C H R I S T H O S W
M A N G E R G O O D S L O R D

ANGEL

BETHLEHEM

CENSUS

CHRIST

DECREE

FIELD

FIRST BORN

FLOCK

GLORY

GOD

GOOD NEWS

JOSEPH

LORD

MANGER

MARY

NAZARETH

NO ROOM

SHEEP

SHEPHERDS

WRAPPED

(Solution to *The Birth of Jesus* puzzle may be found on the *Activities and Digest* page.)

Oak Lake Activities

Book of Numbers Seminar

The MIQRA Institute is offering a winter seminar on the book of Numbers on Saturday, January 30, 8:00 to 12:00 noon at Old Cheney Alliance Church, 5201 Old Cheney Rd. The cost is \$50.00 per person (\$75 for married couples). Due to budget restrictions, our church will not be offering scholarship assistance this year. Therefore, instead of signing up on the office counter, please register directly by contacting the MIQRA office at 420-7677 or miqra@miqra.net no later than Wednesday, January 27. While everyone is welcome, MIQRA seminars are especially geared for those involved in education ministries (Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, children and youth ministry leaders). For more information, visit www.miqra.net.

---Vern Steiner

Oak Lake Digest



It is my daily prayer to pray for the people who make up Oak Lake Church to instill in us a spirit of unity and caring. I now want to thank you for the many cards, visits, and remembrances together with prayers for my recovery. May the Lord bless each and every one of you.

In His Love and Mine,
Helen

(Helen Klaus, a member of Oak Lake, broke her hip in three places last March.)

We want to thank our church family for all of the prayers for Madisen and the rest of our family. Words cannot express our gratitude for all of you. The meals are very much appreciated and very helpful! As we are people that are always on the go, it is easy to forget about the really important things in life. Going through a trial can really put your life into perspective and make you reevaluate what really matters! We appreciate your continued prayers for Madisen.

We are very blessed to have such a loving and caring church family. Thank you so much!

Andrew and Lindsey Bartsch



Thank you to everyone in our church body who sent a Christmas card to Jim Hart. (Jim is a member of our church who is in jail.) He told Pastor

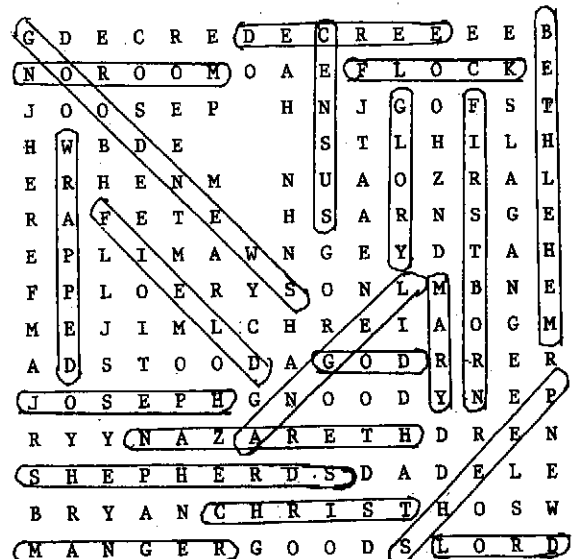
Bryan in a recent phone conversation that he was surprised and blessed by the cards that he received. Jim sent the church a Christmas card with greetings in it for all of us. It is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer. Please take a moment and read it.

Kid's Word Puzzle

This month we are featuring a kid's word puzzle called "The Birth of Christ." by Jim Hart. Below is the solution to this puzzle:

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

LUKE 2:1-20



(Pastor's Pen continued.)

even as he lived to do the Father's will.

This is no easy task and it will take the power of the indwelling Christ, who indwells through his Holy Spirit, who grants us the ability to do so. That means our new lives in Christ must be lived out in His power, doing his will. It means we must become ever more focused on his will, and less focused on our own agendas. We must begin to see one another through the eyes of Jesus, and minister as his hands and feet in the world around us. It won't happen over-night, but it must be true more and more. Our lives must take on a more Christ-like appearance as we give ourselves to doing his will more and more.

We know what love looks like; now we must become the face of his love to others. My prayer for the church for 2010 is found in the words of Paul's prayer for Thessalonica: "*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you*" (1 The. 3:12).

May God grant each one a blessed year in following him. And may he bring many to faith through your love in Jesus name.

--Pastor Dale

(Branches continued.)

Mary says that her favorite Bible verse "is kind of cheesy," but it has remained her favorite since the third grade. It is Psalm 56:11 which says, "In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Since Mary is naturally a very shy person, she uses this verse to talk herself out of being afraid in many situations. How blessed we are when we find the Lord to be our source of courage and strength!

Lord do I stay on my knees before you as I should? Am I humble in my life, work, family, or do I stretch my pride? How often do I think myself better than others? Do I get upset by the simple things in life; traffic, standing in line? How often do I get upset by those who cut me off or those who treat me wrong? What rights do I have? Didn't I give up those rights on the cross? Help me Father to stay on my knees before you and humble before others.

--Anonymous