

Mountain Lutheran Church

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Ralph B. Herman and Ginger DuMars, Pastors

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From Pastor Ralph

Can I Be Sure?

Thomas á Kempis, in his classic "Imitation of Christ," tells of the man who was too anxious about the assurance of his salvation. First he hoped, and then he feared. He was exalted, and then he was depressed. Some of us would call it the "yo-yo" up and down experience.

Our poor man prostrated himself before the altar and prayed, "O Lord, if only I knew that I should persevere!" Presently he heard God's voice within his soul, "And if you did know, what then would you do? Do now what you would do then, and you will be very secure."

Thomas á Kempis adds, "And forthwith being comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and that anxious fluctuation ceased."

It is all a matter of simple trust. A wise man put it neatly: "If you worry, you don't trust. If you trust you don't worry."

Let's bring it down to a simple, everyday experience. You are in a grocery store. You buy a can of beans. How do you know it really contains beans? You can't be sure. You don't go to the manager, demanding that the can be opened to be sure that it doesn't contain

peas or carrots. You trust and your trust is seldom misplaced.

Faith is just that simple, and even more sure, for we are depending on His promises, which are many. One of them is "Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37b).

Church Council Members:

President	Dick Parker
Vice President	Harold Basey
Secretary	Audrey Fiance
Treasurer	Elden Bruha
Financial Secretary	Bob Smith
Members at Large	Tom Sweeney
Pastor Ralph	
Pastor Ginger	

Our Volunteer chairpersons for this year are:

Lay Assistants	Tom Carman
Education	
Altar Guild	Delores Van Brocklin
Publicity	Dorothy Parker Ginger DuMars
Craft Faire	Shirley Carman
Prayer Chain	Judy Basey
Newsletter Editor	Mary Bruederle
Refreshments	Judy Basey
Music and Worship	Tom Carman

Pastor Ginger's News

THANK YOU'S & PRAISES

You all have inspired and blessed me so much that it's easy to begin this New Year with an attitude of gratitude! As Paul wrote to Timothy, I also write to you: "I am grateful to God – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.... I am reminded of your sincere faith" and generosity! And, I am very grateful! Thank you for your thoughtful and generous Christmas gift! Cash is always helpful and greatly appreciated! Thank you also for a generous reimbursement of 2006 expenses which I did not expect, but which makes paying bills much easier! **THANK YOU!**

I know that we were all very pleased and inspired with how **BEAUTIFUL** our new church looked & felt for the Christmas Season! What a delightful way to give Father, Son & Holy Spirit some glory & praise! Many people donated poinsettias & wreaths, Christmas ornaments & lights, a Christmas tree & garlands & bows, & a beautiful Nativity Set – not to mention lots of time decorating and later taking down & preparing the decorations for storage 'til next December. What a wonderful Christian family God has given all of us at Mountain Lutheran Church! Thanks to everyone who helped or donated! Jesus enjoyed a lovely Birthday Celebration at Mountain Lutheran Church! **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

Thank you, Tom & Shirley Carman, for organizing our bread order and donation to Groveland's Community Christmas Basket program.

Thanks for delivering the 50 loaves to the Community Center at the time they requested! Tom has begun updating our Web Site (mountainlutheranchurch.com) so take a look & give him your ideas. Thanks, Tom! We all were inspired by the special music offered by guest soloist Gail Perlee & accompanist, Barbara Whittlesey on Epiphany Sunday! What a treat! Thank you, Tom, for arranging for this special music! Look for a Men's Quartet – coming soon!

Thanks also to Brandyn Combest for the loan of his marvelous keyboard. Although it's a complex instrument, Elizabeth is getting more comfortable with it & its vast possibilities. Brandyn is Christina Wilkinson's son (& David's step son) & is finishing Air Force Boot Camp in Texas now. He was immediately assigned as an Academic Leader (tutor/ teacher to help others in his group). Graduation is scheduled for Jan. 19 with arrival at Monterey's Military Language School on Jan. 22. **Congrats, Brandyn!**

Thank you, June Barto, for organizing the reception and doing all the shopping for Pastor Mike Jaenecke's Memorial Service on Dec. 16! What a lovely tribute to one of Mountain Lutheran's founding pastors! Thank you, to all the hostesses who helped also and to Pastor Ralph for the lovely service! We are certainly going to miss the Bartos with their move to Sonora. What a blessing & inspiring force June & Doc have been to our church – in numerous ways! Without them, we might still be building this church facility! We hope they will come back to visit often, & they can expect us to invite them

out for lunch or coffee or Bible Study on occasion also!

CHRISTMAS CARDS, FUND RAISERS, & FINANCIAL \$ INFO.

Thank you - Judi, David & Christina Wilkinson – for your artistic work and your donation of our beautiful Congregational Christmas Card! We raised \$510 for our Building Debt Reduction and enjoyed beautiful cards & greetings from one another in the process. On Dec. 31 we were able to pay Pastor Ralph & Pat \$8000 towards our Building Loan with them, and another \$7000 on Jan. 7! Thanks to everyone who has helped with Building Project Fundraisers this year! And, thanks to Ann & Ted Gehrig for the Christmas card idea a couple of years ago! Thanks also to everyone who also donated to E.L.C.A.'s World Hunger Project. We sent a check for \$211 to our Synod for this project – which included some donations from our South Korean guests last fall.

Speaking of fund raising – thanks to Anna & Harold Bramhall and Thelma & Dick Faux & everyone who contributed aluminum cans & bottles – we received \$709 from recycling in December! That sum went towards our Building Debt Reduction also. The Bramhalls & Fauxes took all that recycling to the redemption centers for that great refund! Thank you! Bramhalls & Carmans have offered to collect clean recycling at their homes for the church. Be sure to call them before you take your bags of recycling to them.

Because our members and visitors are generous and practice good stewardship, we are beginning the New Year with

\$16,151 in our checking & savings accounts – that's with all the bills and benevolences paid (exception: the balance of our loan due to the Hermans). Last year's estimated income was \$37,000 and actual (general) income was \$40,600! In addition \$34,115 was donated & raised for the Building Fund. At the Christmas Eve (7 p.m.) Service the offering was \$1050, which was designated for the Building Fund/ Loan Payments (except for envelopes indicating other designations). What BIG HALLELUIAHS & BIG BLESSINGS!

BIBLE STUDY & FLOWERS & COFFEE HOUR

The Women's Bible Study has resumed meeting on the first & third Thursdays of each month at 1:00. So the next sessions are Jan. 18 and Feb. 1 & 15. On Jan. 18 we'll clean the church at 10:30 a.m. & have a BYO lunch together before Bible Study. We hope to meet in Sonora for lunch sometime in later Feb. or March. We thoroughly enjoyed a Wonderful Advent & Christmas High Tea, Luncheon & Cookie Exchange at Mary Bruederle's home on Nov. 30. What an elegant & delicious event! And, what beautiful Christmas décor and fellowship we all enjoyed! Thank you, Mary Bruederle & Judy Basey for hosting this awesome Tea & Luncheon!

New Sunday Coffee Hour/ Refreshments & Flower Sign Up Charts are in the kitchen area – near the refrigerator. Hosts & hostesses and flower donors are most appreciated! Thank you, Jean Cox & Judy Basey & McAdams family, for taking care of the flowers for January! Thank you, Judy Basey & Mary

& Elden Bruha for your tender loving care for the poinsettias during Dec. & Jan.! GENTLE REMINDERS: We need the coffee & refreshment hosts & hostesses to vacuum the multi purpose area and to take the used garbage bags home – yes – with the garbage. Thank you!

SYNOD REPORTS

Pastor Ralph & Elden Bruha & I have been working on our Annual (or Semi-Annual) Reports for the synod. Increases in giving & benevolence & attendance are nice to report – not to mention the completion of our building project & dedication & ongoing catechism classes & Bible study! I have notified Bishop Mullen of our congregation's & my contract for me to continue as Associate Pastor – with pay - & have asked for Synod's approval and for the Bishop's blessing. I'll keep you informed as to any communications with our Synod. **THANK YOU for asking me to continue as your Associate Pastor & for all your prayers & support! With Faith, Hope & Love,**
Pastor Ginger DuMars

Bud's Bits

"Why is God's peace so different from peace as the world knows it? It is because it embodies a pureness of heart that allows us to see Christ when we look into the eyes of our neighbor."

From The Peaceful Kingdom - advent devotional booklet - PLTS Text: Matthew 5:8-10

“Action is a grateful response that flows from our awareness of God's presence in this world.

Jesus' entire ministry was one great act of thanksgiving to his Father. We are called to participate in that very ministry.”

Henri J.M. Nouwen

A Word from Shirley

Please start looking in your cupboards, closets, basement, and garage for good saleable items for the Flea Market in the spring. The proceeds will go into the building fund. If you have any questions call Shirley Carman 962-5647.

Food for Thought

You need the church, the church needs you, the world needs both.

When the church ceases to be in touch with another world, it is no longer in touch with this world.

All church buildings should be air conditioned; it is unhealthy to sleep in a hot, stuffy room.

The Christian's walk and talk must go together.

Korean Visitors

In October we were blessed to have a group of Korean visitors that called wanting to come to our church for worship. The next page has a couple of pictures of the group that came.

