

The Harbinger



1 Samuel 12:24 - But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Luke 18:8 - However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?



Fighting for Faith

Nicolas Dolce



I am a Lutheran. I can now say this with pride and certainty. That has not always been the case. In the past, I've often been uncertain and far less knowledgeable of my beliefs. I hope to hold on to my "Christian know-how" in the future, but I know it won't be without facing doubt or troublesome times. Out of my -circle of friends, maybe 3 or 4 are practicing Christians, true believers. This is less than 1/3 of the people I'm counting, so you can see where I'm leading with this. What shapes my faith does not come from this group of people. I don't keep my faith a secret, necessarily, but I'm not exactly being pushy or preachy either.

When I'm with my friends, our faith is very "contained". Some are atheists, others Jewish, while still others are uncertain - so religion and faith are approached with caution. Even at school, outside of wearing a cross, my faith is not hidden, but neither is it on display. I'm a "Christian Lutheran" to anyone who asks, but they don't often ask. Not many consider themselves Christian, or for that matter, religious. Some of them seem to create their own "religion", which is often semi-hedonistic or just plain depressing.

Fighting for Faith is often a chaotic journey; it's hard to be a perfect Christian. Being a Christian is not always easy for us adolescents; however, the congregation at Christ Lutheran Church has never failed to support us in our Faith journey.

***As humans, our journey of faith is a flawed, problematic, difficult adventure. But, as Christians, we know "God is in charge". Faith is messy. Only God's love is perfect for an imperfect people. The following are comments from a number of iChurch youth on the subject of faith and religious belief:*

"Peer pressure makes it very hard to be good. Once a group of kids decides to do "bad things" everybody else seems to get caught up in it."

"I am pretty comfortable talking about my faith because I feel I know what I am talking about, and some people may actually start to agree with me. They don't often change their views, but I can usually get them to consider it."

"Many of my friends consider themselves atheists, (they think they're cool), and they feel uncomfortable if I talk about God. I do have some Christian friends, and we occasionally talk about faith."

"In stressful situations, many people have "foxhole" conversions to faith, but I believe that you cannot just switch Christianity on and off. God should be in our life always."

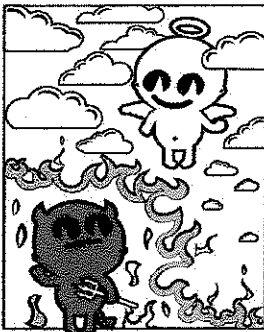
"I have come to you in search of faith, 'Cause I can't see beyond this place..."

"Many people turn to God only when they need something. This could be the result of poor faith. They are probably desperate to alleviate their situation, and their personal crisis causes them to turn to God."

"Forgiveness is hard to ask for. How can I be sorry for the things that I have done when I know for a fact that I will do them again? We are all naturally sinners and saying sorry for something we have done is easy; but MEANING it is something else. Are we truly sorry about the sins we have done if we have no intention of stopping? So when I say that I am sorry for my sins, I find myself apologizing not just for the things I have done, but also for the things I will continue to do despite my better knowledge."

***That's why it's called "messy faith". Actually, it is not always easy to ask forgiveness, yet God does forgive us. We also have to forgive and love ourselves, and ask for God's help to guide us along the right path. And even when we get there, we tend to stray. We're human and we are imperfect. God's grace and forgiveness are perfect. That's what we strive for as Christians, that's the message of Faith. That's the message we need to pass on to others.*

Among the Wolves - Messy Faith



Attending the fall retreat at Harvey Cedars was a blast. The theme of the retreat was "Messy Faith". Activities included a beach cleanup, tie-dye shirts, finger painting and prayer stones. We also were allowed free time, and I enjoyed playing beach volleyball and browsing at the book store. We worked together in small groups and discussed our own "messy" faith with God. The whole idea of getting messy was to illustrate that faith is often a difficult task. It was not meant to be easy. It was great time for all, and we hated to see it end.

Chantal Ramhorst

Seven young adults from Christ Lutheran Church attended the NJ Synod Junior High Retreat at Harvey Cedars "AMONG THE WOLVES", Nov. 20-22. It was another wonderful religious experience for youth and adult chaperones. The theme was Messy Faith, which addressed the needs of youth in reference to the problems that exist in our lives today and how our faith can get us through it. The participants were able to discuss in small and large groups from other churches, their concerns and doubts in today's society, dealing with their faith, and how God plays a role in our lives, no matter how messy it becomes. The music, speakers, food, and activities were enjoyed by all. We hope to increase the number of young people that attend the synod conferences, so they can grow spiritually and openly express their faith. Watch for the upcoming retreat for senior high members to attend a conference the last weekend in January. Poster and sign up to be out soon.

Mary Zeigler Youth Advisor and Chaperone

SURF REPORT



A NEW GROUNDSWELL OF FAITH HAS PICKED UP OVERNIGHT AND MIXES WITH VERY MINIMAL SOUTHERLY GRACE. CONDITIONS ARE FAIRLY CLEAN OVERALL WITH GENERALLY LIGHT PRAYER RIGHT NOW. FAITH WILL BE ON THE RISE THROUGH THE MORNING UNTIL IT HITS A HIGH RIGHT AROUND LUNCH TIME.

"I have come to you in search of faith, 'Cause I can't see beyond this place..."

50TH ANNIVERSARY!

Make A Joyful Noise!

"The music was awesome! My family loved it. I enjoyed singing like a member of the church. It really came together. I thoroughly enjoyed working alongside such talented adults... it was a lot of fun!" Those were a few of the comments from Argine Safari's Pascack Valley HS Chamber Choir, who joined the CLC chancel choir along with many other adults recruited to sing for our 50th anniversary sacred music celebration. The Chamber Choir is PVHS's most advanced choral ensemble, and students must audition to join. The Chamber Choir regaled the audience with an a cappella "Verbum Caro Factum Est" (The Word Made Flesh) by Hans Leo Hassler. The Chancel Choir was very impressed by their performance, and felt they brought a lot of energy to the event (although many were dead tired from performing the previous evening - not that you could tell). The students were very impressed with our own soprano soloists, Lois Hainsselin and Janine Capone, as well as the guest soloists, who were also outstanding. The students enjoyed the opportunity to sing in such a large and varied group with so many excellent voices. For many, it was a rare opportunity to perform with such a large group *and* an orchestra. In fact, there was one quote in particular from a PVHS student that summed it up quite nicely: "It was beautiful. The trio, who played the songs based on the poems, was amazing. And the choir was awesome. Overall, Epic."

Yeah, it *was* Epic.

The 50th Anniversary Dinner

Stacy Hoenigmann



The 50th Anniversary dinner was held at the beautiful Woodcliff Lake Manor on November 1st, after a special 50th anniversary service. While hors d'oeuvres were being served, members of the church were free to mingle and watch the slideshow of the church's history, or sign the special paper that would be included in the church's time capsule. Many members, me included, took the time to write out a message on the paper to the future members of Christ Lutheran Church in 2059. Certain members spoke about the church, Lois sang "Amazing Grace", and Pastor Mitchell said a few words for the occasion. It was a nice celebration of our church's 50th year, and I am confident that our 100th celebration in 2059 will be just as good when I help open the time capsule!

iCHURCH



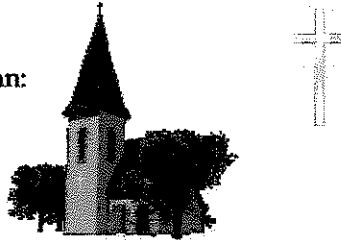
iChurch had a good turnout for the Fall session. The youth are starting to explore the subject of "Faith", and exploring creative ways of doing so. All of us struggle with doubts, but during the teenage years approaching adulthood it becomes especially difficult. We want to acknowledge that these doubts exist, but also try to give them reasons to explore their faith, and to have a strong faith. The youth also organized to help build the crèche scene that now stands in front of the Church on Pascack Valley Road. iChurch usually meets on the last Sunday of each month during the 10:30 service. Youth from grades 9 thru 12 are welcome to attend. If you have questions, see Mary Zeigler, or any member of the Youth Committee.

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BOOK REVIEW:

The Millwood Hollow Series, 3 books by Patricia Hickman:
Fallen Angels, Nazareth's Son & Whisper Town

"Don't lay down your plow..."



The stories take place during the Great Depression, in a little town called Nazareth, Arkansas. What began as a con for an uneducated sharecropper, and now a wanted man, Jeb Nubey, becomes a calling as a preacher for the Church in the Dell. In addition to his relationship as a father figure for 3 children left for orphans, each book in the series brings a new set of crises into Jeb's life, and demonstrates how he turns to God and faith to make it through difficult times. Excerpt - "Jeb thought of something that he had read. 'A lack of sight without God's eyeglasses gives us a defective view. We see what we want to see instead of what is true. If it smells religious, we idly agree, and then invoke heaven's name. Christ told us not to worry about the bad seed sown among us. God has his own way of separating the good from the imitation.'"

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

LIVE FROM CLC! IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT!!

» Rejoice! «



Beginning in January 2010, Youth Ministry will be sponsoring a Saturday evening service where the new youth band, "Witness", will perform. For those who enjoy contemporary Christian worship and music, this will be a terrific opportunity to hear Witness perform. Led by youth music director David Scance, the band members have worked very hard to develop as a tight musical group, and they've already performed a few times during Sunday worship. While the service will be youth oriented, all are welcome to attend.

The first service will be on Saturday, January 123rd at 7 PM. Snacks and refreshments will be provided after the service where youth and others attending can hang out and socialize. As always, we encourage you to bring a friend to this special event. We hope to make this a monthly event, but we'll need the involvement of youth and adults to make this a success. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Valerie Provost, or speak to any member of the Youth Committee.

***Revised from original date*

ON THE HORIZON

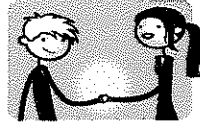


PASSING ON THE FAITH CONFERENCE, FEBRUARY 26 - 28

How do we communicate the importance of Faith to our children? To our families and friends? To the world around us? Christ Lutheran Church and the Dominick and Anna Boyd Ricci Foundation are proud to sponsor "Passing on the Faith" - a weekend conference designed to help congregations reevaluate and transform their ministry, and strengthen faith outside the church in our daily lives. Youth Ministry has surveyed area churches that have participated in the program, and the feedback has been very positive. We invite everyone in the congregation to take part in this event, even if you can only spare an hour or two. We think you'll find that it is time well spent. Please plan to attend if you are able.

For more information, see Valerie Provost or Pastor Peter. There will also be information in the January Messenger.

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PEOPLE TO PEOPLE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM*Greg Provost*

Greg Provost was nominated for the People to People Ambassador Program and accepted on Oct 22. If you would be interested in sponsoring Greg in this worthy effort, please see Valerie Provost. Please read on for more info:

The People to People Ambassador Program was founded by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, to promote world peace through increased understanding of citizens of the world. President Eisenhower explained "I like to believe that people, in the long run, are going to do more to promote peace than our governments." Over the past five decades nine U.S presidents have served as honorary chairmen of People to People.

As a student ambassador, I will be traveling to the Netherlands, Belgium, France, England, Wales, and Ireland for nineteen days in July of 2010 with forty other students from surrounding areas. I will be learning about the geography, history, government, and cultures of the places we visit. I will also be developing civic awareness, citizenship, communication, and other skills to prepare me to be a People to People Ambassador. People to People Ambassadors are granted access to significant people and venues not typical to the usual tourist. We will be participating in a meaningful, localized project while on the program. I will also be gaining academic college credit for my experience.

Being an Ambassador is very important to me, it is a chance to show people from other countries what Americans are like. It is a chance to go beyond learning in a classroom to real life experiences where I can appreciate how big the world is and how people in other countries live. I will be challenged to come out of my comfort zone and gain a broader view of the world. I am sure I will make lifelong friends that I will never forget.

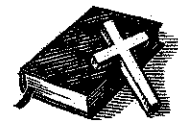
Congratulations to the 2009 Confirmands!



John Paul Carbaugh, Liam Conboy, Lauren DiBlasi, Chantal Ramhorst & Christopher Rudie

These five fine young men and women took part in a service on October 11th, to commit to becoming active members of the church. It was an emotional day for Pastor Peter, as he picked out a special reading for each confirmand. Confirmation is learning the faith, and learning about being a Christian Lutheran in our world. It is also learning how important we are to God and how we can apply His word to our life each day individually and also as a community.

We pray that they all continue to grow in faith, and do good works.



The Harbinger:

Editors: Nicolas Dolce & Stacy Hoenigmann

Assistant Editors: Chantal Ramhorst & Greg Provost

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for their help and support.

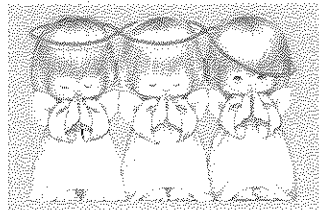
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AMEN CORNER

"You say you lost your faith, But that's not where it's at
 You had no faith to lose, and you know it."
 Bob Dylan, from *Positively 4th Street*

Faith is a word that gets tossed around rather casually in our culture today. It is often a difficult concept to understand for our youth, especially when for most of them, Faith evaporates the moment they run into those who believe Jesus is a fairy tale, and religion a waste of time. Many have doubts. Some are not sure if they really want to believe all they are being told in church. It's important to develop a strong faith, but it's not easy. We should acknowledge doubts when they exist, but also ask "why, do they exist?" It's critical to have this discussion with youth. A big part of the "Passing on the Faith" program in February is designed not only to strengthen faith in our church, but in our homes and daily lives. This event is not only important for our youth, but for all members of Christ Lutheran Church. Please plan to attend, and let's start the conversation.

DAILY **B**READ
 Food for Thought



"Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car." — Garrison Keillor

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. -- George Burns

Two boys were walking home from church after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?"
 The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your dad."



"Pastor, about this new idea to reach teens..."

"I have come to you in search of faith, 'Cause I can't see beyond this place..."