

# The Visitor

## 'Expanding God's Kingdom in the next generations'

*First Lutheran Church of Northridge*

July 25, 2008

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### **In the Center of It All**

As we are situated in a central location in the life of the Valley, we have blessed the wider community outside our own church community in many significant ways. None more important than our schools. We continue to serve the people of the Valley by providing excellent educational opportunities. More important, but also less visible, we are discipling children in the ways of Jesus that many would not receive if they didn't attend the school. As a congregation, we continue to provide much support for this ministry financially (tuition doesn't cover what we are doing), and abundantly in so many other ways. In this, we continue to be a blessing to the community around us.

As we look at our future here in the Valley, are there other ways we can serve in our community? Of course. I have been lifting up the call of Jesus to be a good neighbor beginning right here, surrounding our own church campus. As we make progress being a blessing for the people of our neighborhood and expanding outward, we see a significant opportunity to be a beacon of life "where we are planted." Many people have talked about opportunities of recreational ministry as we have such great outdoor resources right here. They are wise.

I mentioned in a recent message that if you draw a circle in a three mile radius with the center being our church campus, then you would have one of the most congested cities in the United States, with a population of 227,000 people in that compact space! In this same geographic area there are six parks. Six parks for recreation and refreshment; oases in the middle of the Valley. Or one park for every 37,833 people.

Now, Madison, Wisconsin is the closest city in population to this 3 mile radius, also with about 227,000 people. Geographically, Madison is a much wider area. There is another slight difference, however. Madison has 260 parks!

One key way we can connect with people, and connect people to Jesus is recreational ministry. In fact, in the latest demographic study of religious receptivity for this 3 mile radius (Surveys contracted by our church synod by the Percept Group- 2008), "Recreation" activities was the number #1 most likely way to connect to people not involved in a faith community. In other words, an entry point to connect with people who are not part of our church community. This was almost double the preference for the #2 most likely connection, "Spiritual Development."

This isn't hard to figure out. Think about the initial invitation of inviting someone to worship and compare that to inviting someone to a BBQ. A picnic. A fiesta. Whatever the activity. Play soccer. Play basketball. Throw frisbees. Whatever the game. Jesus had his disciples host parties (Mark 2:15) to make connections. He's a pretty smart guy.

I never stop inviting friends and strangers alike to worship here. Praise God, some come. At the same

time, I know for me, as we begin to think of ways to further use our campus to the glory of God, using our creativity and imagination like Jesus did when he was on earth, all of a sudden my mind is expanded. Do you see the possibilities.

### **In the Name of...**

As Christians, we are partners with God as we live our lives for his glory. Life is life. We don't separate the "secular" from the "sacred" as God has opportunity to work through all of his creation. An important teaching on this point for me is Colossians 3.17.

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

What does this mean for practical purposes? There is no distinction between "church" work and "secular" work. If you live as a representative of Jesus and with his power, the meaning of "*in the name of the Lord Jesus*," then you are doing "God work." "God work" is done through church ministry, and through everything else you do. If God is informing your business life, and his ways are the filter for your decision making, then you are doing "God work." If you are coaching a little league team, encouraging young people in this way, you are doing "God work." If you are studying hard, using the intellect and determination God has given you, then your school work is "God work."

"*Whatever you do...*" So, know that when we do ministry together through a "church" ministry we are doing "God work" and when we are serving in our daily lives outside of "church" ministry we are doing "God work." In this way, we don't get confused by thinking that giving time to do "church work" is somehow different than giving time to any activity "*in the name of Jesus*." We need the influence of godly people in the boardroom of corporations, stocking the aisles of supermarkets, walking the halls of high school, working on the sets of movies, looking after an aging mother, sharing good conversation with a next door neighbor- just as much as we need godly people serving in church ministries. We are a "light on a hill" in our daily life, too.

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### **It's Never Too Early For You To Shop! (For You Or For Christmas Presents!)**

For several years, First Lutheran has set up a display table to sell art and crafts for African Team

Ministries. This year we will have a table set up before and after services on **Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>**. All items, including beautiful handcrafts, magnificent jewelry and art, are made in Kenya. First Lutheran has generated thousands of dollars over the years to help this Synod approved ministry. All money collected goes to Churches in East Africa that support: those orphaned by AIDS, providing both care and an education; help in the training of 5,000 lay elders (both men and women) in Kenya for the AIDS prevention ministry; assistance for people displaced by political and violent unrest, by providing food, blankets, shelter and support; and helping the refugees to return to their homes. Education, a dream for many, often becomes a reality with the continuing help of African Team Ministries. Please "stop and shop" for the beautiful African items. Credit cards are accepted. Call Buzz Brown for more information or answers to questions.

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### **Sponsor a Child Program**

First Lutheran Church has always been a generous contributor to the Sponsor a Child program. We would love to see that tradition continue.

The Sponsor a Child program provides financial assistance to families in need so that their child(ren) can attend a Christian School. The child(ren) not only gets a great academic education but also learns, most importantly, about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The new school year will soon be upon us, so please consider contributing to our Sponsor a Child program. If you are interested in helping to provide a Christian education, please prayerfully consider Sponsoring a child at our school.

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### **VBS at the Power Lab was a blast!**

A big thank you to all the amazing volunteers who so graciously gave of their time, money and talents to make VBS an action packed, fun filled week of sharing the Power of Jesus!

And a big thanks to all the wonderful kids who were so excited and enthusiastic about learning and sharing Jesus' love.

We can't wait until next summer to see what the Lord has planned for VBS.

Blessings from the Children's Ministry

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### VIA CON DIOS AMIGAS!

Via Con Dios means "Go with God." This is commonly used when friends are parting. There is also a common Spanish phrase Hermanos en Cristo "Friends in Christ." Both play a part in First Lutheran's upcoming Mission Peru trip. "Amigas" (Lady friends) Abigail Brown, Donnice Brown, and Kelsey Mahoney will leave Tuesday morning July 29, for 10 days. They will buy basic food supplies - flour, rice, diapers, clothes for the poor families, and fruit for the church school children. The children only get fruit once a week for their lunch. Kelsey will be building a library (books and shelves) for the children attending Casa de los Ninos (House of the Children). This school is the ministry of the church Jesus de Nazareth. All this because First Lutheran "friends" donated almost \$1,500 to help these three Amigas make this mission trip a reality. Mucho Gracias! And Via Con Dios.

*Pray for our family and friends*

#### **HEALING**

Matthew Wheeler  
Alan Morgan  
Bryan Lande  
Jim K  
Amy W  
Jim R  
Caroline  
Hershey Gehris  
Francisco Soto  
Linda B  
Geri H  
Nicky S  
Gary Spraggins  
Tom Asbury  
Shirley Johnson  
Nicolas Arce  
Gloria Sabella  
Jim & June  
Sheila  
Duane Judisch  
Callah  
Araceli  
Varsha  
Jan Thomas  
Al J  
Troy Pflieger

Valerie Johnson  
Tom Young  
Evelyn Brown  
Kee Schilling  
Eugene Hansen  
Helen Polk

#### **DIRECTION**

Dusty  
Raffy Family  
Todd

#### **PROTECTION/SAFE TRAVEL**

Carlos Aguirre  
Vega Family  
Nibo Family  
Helene Wicox

#### **THANKSGIVING**

Dave Damien

#### **COMFORT**

*Family and friends of Collin Bowen, mourning his death serving our country in Iraq  
Regina K  
Family and friends of Matt McHale, mourning his death  
Greg Laurie and family mourning the death of his son, Christopher*

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#### **FLY Calendar**

August 3,10,17 & 24 .....LUNCH & A MOVIE....  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Youth Room  
Great movies.....great food , great hang out time.

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#### **Thursday Night Adult Bible Study**

Thursday Night Adult Bible Study This is an ongoing study of the Gospel of John that you can join at any time. Doors open at 6:00pm and discussion begins at 6:30 - 7:45. Bring a "sack" dinner and dessert/beverages provided. Childcare needed? Call Lorraine at 818-345-3766.

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#### **Come to the Living Waters – Women of the ELCA**

#### **Southwest Synod Convention**

October 17-19, 2008 - Simi Valley  
More information to follow or contact Beth Yaros – 818.709.6489 – [bethyaros@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bethyaros@sbcglobal.net)

*Calendar*

<b>SUN 7/27</b>	
9:00 10:45 11:00 a.m.	Outdoor Worship Worship FLY Lunch and a movie
MON 7/28	
8:00 a.m.	FLY Leaves for WSYG
<b>SUN 8/3</b>	
9:00 & 10:45 a.m. 11:00	Worship FLY Lunch and a movie
<b>SUN 8/10</b>	
9:00 & 10:45 11:00 a.m.	Worship FLY Lunch and a movie
<b>SUN 8/17</b>	
9:00 & 10:45 11:00 a.m.	Worship FLY Lunch and a movie

**Think Scrip:**

Think Scrip for Albertsons, Gelsons, Hows, Smart & Final, and Vons. We also have Macy's, Starbucks, Arco and many more stores. For more information or a listing of available retailers, stop by the Scrip table following services on Sunday.

**LSS ONGOING FOOD DRIVE**

First Lutheran Church of Northridge  
18355 Roscoe Boulevard  
Northridge Ca, 91325  
(818) 885-6861  
www.firstlutheran.org

**Staff**

**Dana Hanson**  
Senior Pastor

REMEMBER our mission to help fill the cupboards at LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE! *Items needed:* baby food/cereal, boxed cereals, canned soup, packaged cookies, cooking oil, cup-of-soups, Dry powdered milk, Boxed macaroni & cheese, pinto beans, pop-top canned foods, rice, spam, tuna, vienna sausage, toothpaste, shampoo, bar soap, laundry soap, paper towels, napkins, Kleenex, bleach, feminine hygiene items. These items can be dropped off in the box located in the church lobby.

--- *As you do it for the least of these, you do it for me. (Matt: 25:40)*

**Look Who's Having A Birthday!**

- 7/26 Lauren Williams
- 7/28 Alexa Hernandez & Leti Muranaga
- 7/29 Angela Vitalis, Sean Rogers
- 7/31 Wendy Maceri & Patrick Raffy
- 8/1 Barry Johnson
- 8/2 Aaron Axelrod
- 8/4 Irene Walton
- 8/5 Rusty Revheim
- 8/7 Barbara Lestrangle & Dianne Nye
- 8/9 Rebecca Lienhard
- 8/11 Michael Muranaga
- 8/12 Lisa Axelrod
- 8/13 Eugene Hansen
- 8/14 Nancy Anderson , Kirsten Roessell
- 8/15 Mike Jusko, & Malia Risdall

**Sheree Spraglin**

*School Principal*

**Kristie Godin**

*Preschool Director*

**Vickie De Blasio**

*Congregational Coordinator*

**Buzz Brown**

*Director, Small Groups and Caring Ministries*

**Missy Andrews**

*Director, Youth and Family Ministries*

**Jan Cuadra**

*Director, Kids and Family Ministries*

**Mark Holmstrom**

*Music Director*

**Matt Smith**

*Worship*

**Gloria Hahn**

*Financial Administrator*