



Cross Section



Senior Pastor's Message

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

To paraphrase Saint Paul, I thank the Lord in my every remembrance of you for your continuing partnership in the gospel. How truly blest I am to have the privilege of serving in such an amazing church family. Many congregations believe we have accomplished and built to the glory of God simply because our wallets are overflowing. However, after 37 years in the ministry, I realize these people have no clue as to the location of your wealth. They would have to know your loving hearts to understand the source of your sacrifices for the Kingdom of God. Whatever the need, whenever the call goes forth for prayer and sacrifice, Cross of Christ has responded in love for the Savior.

I wish you a joyful New Year in Christ, may it be a year bright with opportunity to make a difference through your one, and only life. Sometimes we all wonder if God is truly using us to make a difference in the lives of others. During the week of December 20, 2006, I was truly moved by the unsolicited testimonies of numerous individuals and families after viewing the video from "Forward in Faithfulness." Person after person identified themselves as one of those for whom we prayed and built and sacrificed.

This is not to say that our church family is a model of perfection, for we readily admit we are not all that we desire to be for the Lord. However, I firmly believe we are gospel motivated to continue to pray, serve, and sacrifice out of love for Jesus. All the Lord ever wanted was our heart to burn with love for Him..Jesus knew the other aspects of ministry would flow once the heart was captured by His love. As we move forward in 2007, may our love for God and one another continue to grow and expand. I pray you all find that unique area of service where your life will make an eternal difference for others.

The Reusch family extends a heartfelt thank you for the gifts and cards. Your expressions of love touched us deeply and served as one more reminder of why we love you so much! God bless and keep each of you growing in His grace.

(continued on next page)

January 2007

PRAYER FOCUS

"Trust in your money and down you go! But the godly flourish like leaves in spring."

-Proverbs 11:28

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"I cannot even begin to express the joy in my heart over a congregation that would spurn selfishness and self-interest for the welfare of others beyond our walls."

Pastor Jon (continued from previous page)

In closing, I must add another word of thankfulness to our church family. Three years ago, our membership was challenged for the third time to make a pledge from their financial blessings. In our weariness, Reaching Beyond Our Walls sounded like far too much to ask. And yet, you responded in love for the Savior and pledged 1.5 million dollars. The campaign called for half of the money to pay down the principle on our mortgage. Our debt moved from almost 2.2 million to around 900,000 as of this writing. We also funded many new ministries and made significant improvements to our facilities. In keeping faith with our original promises in this campaign, we knew it was time to bless some wonderful ministries outside Cross of Christ. In thanks to God for the blessings of nine years of faithfulness in our sacrifices, Cross of Christ gave a tithe (141,000 dollars) to eight ministries. I cannot even begin to express the joy in my heart over a congregation that would spurn selfishness and self-interest for the welfare of others beyond our walls. Jesus is surely smiling down upon us for providing over 250,000 dollars in resources during 2006 for those in need.

Once again, I thank my God in every remembrance of you! Praise the Lord!

Love in Jesus,
Pastor Jon

Reasons for Not Giving Generously

Giving is an important part of being a Christian. By the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification through the reading and studying of God's Word and in participation in His Sacraments, we become more Christ-like and begin to imitate His giving to us. God's nature is to give. Through faith, we show our gratitude to Him through our giving.

So why don't all of God's people give generously? I would like to list some reasons that Christians might share that prevent them from giving more freely. Their responses to poor giving could be as follows:

1. Giving is not a priority because I keep forgetting that God has created and owns everything and that my entire life is a gift from Him. I admit that I fail to give God credit for my successes in life. Even though I know that He has given me the ability to work and earn a living, I see myself as the one who has worked hard for my income.
2. I can't afford to give generously because I have too many expenses. By the time I pay my mortgage payment, my car loan, utilities, insurances, and groceries, I have nothing left for my church.
3. At this point in my life, I have not been willing to transfer my trust to the Lord. I've been saving my money for myself. Money has become my security. I admit that I've been self-centered rather than God-centered.
4. I don't give as much as I should and could because I have not developed the discipline to give. My lack of giving reflects my own lack of discipline.
5. I don't give often and generously because my church doesn't talk about giving much nor is a high expectation placed on my giving. If I were told more about my need to give and how much I should give, I may be willing to give it a try.

These five responses are fairly typical of the responses given by those who give little. Of course, the spiritual maturity of the giver will be the major factor that determines his generosity or lack of it. May God cause us to examine ourselves and confess our lack of faith and may He then grant us all generous hearts.

PASTOR STEVE: BAPTISE, TEACH AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a wonderful month of celebrating Christmas it was, here at Cross of Christ in the last month. I thoroughly enjoyed the joyful faces of so many who passed through our doors for our Christmas Concert – it truly was a “A Wondrous Night”!

I want to thank all of you for remembering our family with such kind words and incredible generosity. We are grateful recipients of your love for us and the ministry in which we all share. I know of many Pastors whose labor goes unnoticed, unappreciated, and is even met with animosity – I am all the more humbled by you the people of God in this place because of your support and love for all we do.

What will 2007 bring for us? Only our gracious Lord knows the answer to that question. But, until He comes, we will continue to press forward in the race He has commanded us to run. To GO, to BAPTIZE, to TEACH, and to make not just believers (which is not ours to make anyway, as that gift is reserved for the glory of the Holy Spirit who through our faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ changes the heart), but to make DISCIPLES. Those who understand both the commitment and cost of a life lived in Jesus Christ.

In that vein, we will conclude our series on Extreme Discipleship this January, and begin a mini-series on Life Issues. Abortion, euthanasia, stem-cell research – these are all hot topics in our world today and many say that “political” issues should not be discussed in the church. But when the “political” world seeks to promote a lie in place of the truth of scripture, then the church cannot and must not remain silent. Underlying any attempt to change the moral views of our country is sinister agenda to remove and deny our Creator God. Once removed, we have no accountability, no standard for action, no foundation of truth, no guide for charity and mercy. As the scriptures say “Each one does what is right in his own eyes” and to our world, the truth we teach is simply “our truth”. But the scriptures teach us there is only one truth, the truth which God has revealed to the entire world in His Word.

As the song goes “Built on the Rock, the church does stand, even when steeples are falling” – those who are opposed to God will never want to hear what He says in His Word. If we are faithful in our proclamation of that truth, the rock of Jesus Christ – then we must and should expect the world to take aim at us with the desire to tear-down our steeples and destroy us. But the promises of Jesus are sure, if we remain faithful even to the point of death, we will receive the crown of life. Let us always in this New Year – proclaim the only truth that can save mankind from death and destruction, the truth of God to a dying world proclaimed in love. Love for its brokenness, love for its hopelessness, and love for its future.

I hope and pray that you will join in this incredible privilege in the coming year. God Bless and Keep you always!

Pastor Steve



MISSION NEWS AND NOTES

January, 2007 Plate Offering Recipients

In January the plate offerings have been designated for Crossroads Pregnancy Center. More information on this organization is provided on the next page.



Gifts for All God's Children

A hearty thank you is extended to the members and friends of Cross of Christ and families of Cook's Academy for generously providing gifts for 150 children from Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries. Following the instructions for guidelines, wrapping, labeling, and timely return was greatly appreciated.

Special thanks are given to the following:

- Kathy Dowbenko and Jill Larive for making the publicity posters.
- Elise Vogt for helping to check in the gifts on Sunday morning.
- Vic Moigis for driving the church bus, which was completely filled with the gifts, to the waiting semi on the Faith, Troy parking lot.
- Bill & Vera Dreger, Gerry Everson, Juli Garretston, Diann Richards, Gladys Ulmer, Dorothy Wernecke, and Nellie Wooten, for sorting and bagging the gifts by family on Monday morning and helping to load the church bus.
- Verna Besancon for serving as coordinator for the entire project.

Mission Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Mission Committee is tentatively scheduled for Monday, January 8, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room. Anyone who has a heart for mission ministry is welcome to attend. A major item on the agenda is to develop guidelines for deciding which - of the many existing mission opportunities - will be considered by our church. For more information and or input, contact Verna Besancon at 248/253-0289 or at servantvb@gmail.com.

Haiti Mission Trip Next Summer

Diane & Ed Stanke and Linda & Dennis Toth will serve as coordinators for a mission trip to Haiti tentatively planned for the first two weeks in July of 2007. Watch further newsletters for more details or contact these couples directly.

MEMBERS HELPING THOSE IN NEED

Tom Daykin, a member here at COCLC, sent this information on the organizations he works with while volunteering his time during the winter months.

Dear friends & family,

Please check out these web sites if you are interested in what I have been doing:

•Christian Reformed World Relief Committee—<http://www.crwrc.org/relief/na/current.html>

•Southwest Louisiana Recovery Volunteers—http://www.swlavolunteercoordination.org/Photo_page.html

If you just look down the page of the first web site you might just see me in a picture.

God Bless You,
In our SAVIORS service,
Tom

Crossroads Pregnancy Center

January's plate offerings will be given to Crossroads Pregnancy Center, a Christian pro-life center located in Auburn Hills. Their mission statement is ..."We are a non-profit, Christian organization dedicated to assisting abortion-vulnerable women and men who are involved in a crisis pregnancy to choose life for their unborn child. Towards that same end, we are committed to encouraging godly sexual attitudes and practices in our community."

Crossroads offers free pregnancy testing, lay counseling, material assistance (diapers, formula, baby and maternity clothes), post abortion support group, young mom's support group, medical and community referrals, limited ultrasound and childbirth classes. They get no support from the government, but rely on donations from individuals and churches.

Women and teens who desire information are taught about fetal development, abortion procedures/risks and the benefits of abstinence before marriage. Abstinence programs are taught by lay volunteers to middle schoolers in the Troy and Avondale school districts, as well as some private and Christian schools.

I've volunteered at Crossroads for 15 years; it seems like only yesterday I responded to a request in OUR church bulletin. I was nervous, at first, about counseling an abortion-minded woman, but have learned to prepare well, pray and leave the results to God. I have been so blessed by my involvement there. It's a privilege to share Jesus' love and forgiveness with the women who come for help.

Crossroads needs more volunteers (teens as well as adults); we also need diapers, baby clothes, furniture, cash donations etc. Our annual banquet is Saturday, March 10, 2007; we always have a great pro-life speaker and good food. It's an opportunity to learn more about the ministry and consider becoming a donor. Let me know if you're interested in attending.

Our executive director, Tim Stickel, will come to our church on January 21 to share about the ministry at Crossroads.

Mary Lou Temple



**Raise Money For
Cross of Christ...**

**Go to [www.
goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)**

**Designate Cross
of Christ
Lutheran Church,
Bloomfield Hills
MI as your
charity of choice.**

**We raise one
penny per search
for God's
Kingdom!**

Spiritual Spa Recording Available

If anyone is interested in purchasing a 2 CD set recorded at the 2006 Spiritual Spa, please contact the church office. The set includes everything presented by our speaker at the event, Elaine Bickel, and three musical selections from Friday night. The cost is \$10.

Bettye Kelsey

2006 Women of the Year

*"I've got that Sunday school enthusiasm, up in my heart, down in my feet, all over me,
I've got that Sunday school enthusiasm all over me, and I will be here next week."*

-Sunday School Song 1941

Bettye Kelsey was a young girl that entered a church on the arm of a neighbor, taking part in Vacation Bible School. The spirit of the Lord led her to walk by herself each Sunday morning thereafter, where as a child she grew in the Grace of our Lord and Savior.

"Serve the
Lord with
Gladness."

-Psalms 100 vs. 2

Bettye, has been blessed with a loving, Christ centered marriage for over 55 years. She and Art are true soul mates and consider their marriage to be one of their greatest gifts. Through many difficult situations in life, Bettye and Art have gained strength from their faith and their love for one another. They raised four children, felt blessed as their family grew through marriages and today find great joy and comfort in watching their 16 grandchildren walk by faith.

Clearly a "Woman of the Year" has lived a life of service to our Lord. With love, joy, and an enthusiasm that only she can exemplify, Bettye Kelsey has earned this honor. This award reflects a life time of achievement in which a legacy of faithful service is reflected in her everyday life.

Much of her service has been committed to organizations outside her church home, including years of volunteering at the Pontiac State Hospital, spending numerous hours involved with the Lutheran Special Education Ministries and Lutheran Child and Family Services. She also served by supporting many local Orphanages, Hospitals, Campus Crusade for Christ, and an ongoing faithful commitment to Haitian missions.

Bettye has been a member of Cross of Christ since 1976. She has left a legacy to follow as we glance over her years of service. Bettye was the editor of the Cross Section for three years, served as President of the Women's group, as a member of the Church Council for three years. She was instrumental in women being allowed the right to vote.

Bettye has always been a gracious hostess and has used her talents in this area hosting events and activities such as:

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| -Funeral dinners | -Welcoming teas for new member women |
| -Ice cream socials | -Picnic basket auctions |
| -Theater night and After-glow | -Music groups on the church grounds |
| -Farewell teas | -Cross of Christ singer overnights |
| -Pastor Light's retirement Celebration | -Dedication of the Light Center Celebration |
| -Dedication dinner of the new Sanctuary | -First Christmas concert After-glow |

Much of our celebrating at Cross of Christ involved Bettye's dedication to these ministries. She has been Chairman of many committees such as:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| -Nursery-Evangelism | -Vacation Bible School | -Antique Show |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|

Bettye served on these committees for a number of years, in a variety of capacities other than chairman. More recently she served on the stain glass committee and was honored to serve on two Building committees; Empowering the Future Now and Forward in Faithfulness, where many of her prayers were answered by brick and mortar.

Bettye feels honored to be chosen 2006 Woman of the Year. Her years of time spent at Cross of Christ in the service of her Almighty have been by far some of the most treasured moments of her life.

Why Crown Financial Ministries at Cross of Christ?

I was talking with one of our friends at the church the other day when he asked, “just what are you trying to accomplish with Crown Financial Ministries at Cross of Christ?” He went on to say that he had attended a six week workshop on “The Joy of Giving” and it just seemed to be “a bunch of Bible verses meant to prove that people of the church should be tithers.”

In this months article I hope to explain the purpose and passion I have in leading the Ministry of Finance. First, I want to assure everyone that my mission has only one goal: And that is to help people find a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

In order to establish a basis for my thinking, you must understand that the Word of God (the Bible) contains over 2,350 references to money and possessions. Money and possessions are mentioned more than love, angels, faith or hope. I believe God talks about money so much because He knows how important it is in our lives. He knows it is important to us and it is His way of getting our attention. When we have little, we want more. When we have much, we want more.

Since God places a large emphasis on money and possessions, it follows that if we are a Bible based church, which we are, that the leaders of the church must instruct the people of His Church about money. When we teach about money, we teach God's principles for getting out of debt, saving, spending, budgeting, earning money (work), investing, giving and training children. I believe our responsibility is to instruct Christians that the way we think about and the way we handle money in our lives directly impacts our relationship with Jesus Christ. Look at Luke 16:11. Jesus regularly warned His followers to guard their hearts against greed, ego, and pride, because Satan can control God's people with these emotional tools. In the area of finances, God's people are extremely vulnerable. As such, they need to be encouraged to follow the necessary steps that will insure money management according to God's plan, thus assuring financial freedom.

The Gospel of Matthew (Matt 6:24) clearly states that God expects us to serve only one Master— God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He says, you cannot serve money and Me. The same verse provides a caution that since it is impossible to serve more than one master, you will love one and hate the other. What do you think about most?— Money or God? From childhood, we are taught that we must earn money. We attend college to prepare for a “better” job, which insures that we earn money. We accumulate money and prepare for a time when we are unable to work for wages. Our lives are immersed in thinking about money.

Many may believe that the Crown classes are designed exclusively for people who are in debt. That is not true. We do help people who are in debt to become debt free. However, the fact is, our classes are meant to help all people who understand that God loves you and wants the very best life can offer you. We believe that by learning and applying God's principles, we will be financially free. Free to take mission trips, help people in need, provide for our families and enjoy the things that God has provided His people.

Biblical Financial Studies begin Sunday January 21, 2007 and Wednesday January 24, 2007. Business By the Book classes begin January 28, 2007. Contact the church office or Merl Terry at www.terrycrown@comcast.net. (248) 373-8525.

Parish Nursing Ministry: The Tragedy of Abortion

Dear Fellow Members,

A blessed New Year to you! I can't believe how fast 2006 came and went. One year closer to seeing Jesus face to face!! What a great future we have to look forward to!

In January, we celebrate pro-life Sunday to commemorate the sad anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion on demand in our country. Over 46 million abortions have been done since 1973.

We hear in sermons about how abortion is a sin. I know that many of our own members have been hurt by this tragedy, and I want to assure you that God has forgiven you; it is forever erased from His scorebook. All you need to do is admit it and accept the forgiveness He so freely offers through faith in Jesus. Talk with me or one of the pastors if you have concerns; it's always confidential. Crossroads Pregnancy Center offers a free support group and Bible study, "Forgiven and Set Free". Their number is 248-293-0070.

It's interesting, many of the people I work with at Crossroads have an abortion in their past, and now understand how great Jesus' love is for them. They want to return that love by volunteering to help prevent other women from making the same mistake. They are turning something that was evil and destructive into "good" to benefit someone else.

The Jan. 2007 issue of Citizen magazine (Focus on the Family), includes an article sharing the good news that abortion rates as a whole declined more than 28% since the 1980s. There are about 1/3 less clinics, hospitals and doctors who perform abortions. Many states have passed laws to restrict abortions, such as parental notification, informed consent laws, mandatory waiting periods, clinic regulations and partial abortion bans. The youth today are much more pro-life as a whole than my generation.

We are definitely moving in a more God pleasing direction, but still have a long way to go. Please pray about it and how God wants you to be involved in this vital issue. A pro-life rally will be held on Sunday, January 21 from 2-3 PM at Madonna University; let me know if you want to come along with me; it's always a real encouragement to gather with other Christians committed to the same cause.

Blessings in Jesus,
Mary Lou Temple RN
Parish Nurse



Prayer Group

Please join us...

**A prayer group
will start Wed.
Jan. 3rd
after the worship
service (about
7:30 PM) for one
hour.**

**Bring your prayer
concerns;
an elder will join
us.**

**For more
information,
contact Bobbie
Weidendorf
248-626-3464
or Mary Lou
Temple
248-626-4076**

LIBRARY CORNER: SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Welcome to 2007. If you haven't come up with an appealing resolution for the new year yet, what about resolving to listen through one of our newly added sets of audio tapes by Charles Swindoll? *Laugh Again, Experience Outrageous Joy* is a study of Philippians, *You and Your Child* applies biblical wisdom directly to the task of raising children, and *God's Masterwork* (Volume One and Volume Two) helps listeners gain an enhanced understanding of the Bible from Genesis to Daniel. Any of these audio tape resources would contribute to their listener's spiritual growth.

Newly added book resources for spiritual growth include *In the Grip of Grace* by Max Lucardo (large print and regular print editions), *Point Man* by Steve Farrar and *Be Rich, Gaining the Things That Money Can't Buy* by Warren Wiersbe. *In the Grip of Grace* can be used for personal reading or as a Bible study, since there are thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter that send the reader back to the Bible for answers. *Point Man* has a similar format. It is full of scriptural guidance and humor aimed at assisting and challenging each husband and father to assume his responsibility of Christ-centered leadership within his family. And finally, *Be Rich, Gaining the Things that Money Can't Buy* is the only selection which studies a specific book of the Bible, Ephesians. Every chapter starts with a selection from Ephesians, and then the rest of the chapter seeks to clarify its meaning and instruct the reader in its application.

Since children need spiritual growth too, children's additions include *God's Little Instruction Book for Kids*, *The Big Bible Book of Animals* and *Christopher and His Family* (from the Christopher Churchmouse series by Barbar Davoll). *God's Little Instruction Book for Kids* is based on the popular *God's Little Instruction Book*, but has been adapted for children. The idea behind this book is to read a quote and its accompanying Bible verse to your child and then ask if he or she understands their meaning, if not, explain and thus show the scripture verse's relevance for today. For example, "Soft words are pillows for hurts" goes with the verse "A gentle answer will calm a person's anger" from Proverbs 15:1 and "Sin is what the serpent says is in" goes with the verse "You must not do wrong just because everyone else is doing it" from Exodus 23:2. The other two children's additions are both colorful picture books with biblical messages.

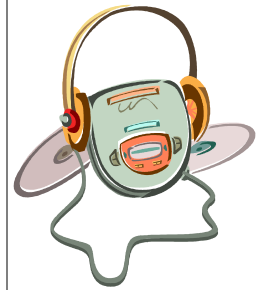
Thank you, donors, for your support in the past year, and thank you to our borrowers for usually remembering to bring back your selections within a couple of months. Anyone with a selection out for over three months should be prepared for a friendly reminder message in January!

Heather Sherk



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Roger & Dody Bree	1/2/1993
Jeffrey & JoAnn Johnson	1/28/1967
Vijhay & Jhansi Kodi	1/22/1987
Steven Peacock & Leslie Evans-Peacock	1/15/2000
Paul & Nancy Wilkie	1/24/1987



SEM STUDENTS: THANKFUL FOR OUR GREAT PROVIDER



Dear members of Cross of Christ,

Ever since you have come into my life by supporting me and my wife Emily while in the seminary, we have been astounded by your generosity. We cannot begin to tell you how much of a blessing it has been to have your prayers and support. The other week we received your unbelievably generous gift from the proceeds of your antique show. Emily and I just sort of sat there with our mouths open, in shock at your continuing generosity. Thank you so very much for that special gift.

As I mentioned previously, Emily and I are in Rapid City enjoying vicarage. The people here are so very kind and welcoming. I feel I am really growing here and will be prepared for the ministry when I leave. I have been preaching about once a month in the fall and now am preaching a lot more as advent begins. The task of delivering God's word to the people here has been a joy and a learning experience that will never stop.

Over Thanksgiving, Emily's parents, as well as her sister and brother-in-law, came to visit. Besides having to fill in at the last minute for a local pastor, it was a pretty relaxing time. It was good to see family and have them see what our lives are like out here. As usual, when the people of Bethlehem met Emily's sister Karen they instantly knew they were sisters as they look so much alike. The same applies to her mother. Having them here was something we truly give thanks for.

My parents and grandmother will be coming for Christmas which will be very exciting. My father lived in Rapid for a little while just after he finished College at Concordia River Forest. Both my parents have degrees from that school, so I kind of carried on that tradition as I attended the Concordia University Ann Arbor for my undergraduate studies. Although my father lived in town for a little while, neither he nor my mother or grandmother have really been into the black hills. Emily and I plan to change that when they come, by taking them skiing and sight seeing.

Emily and I do love being here with these people and in the black hills. We so much enjoy all the outdoor activities that abound in this area. A couple of those things are backpacking and especially photography for myself. I have included with this letter some photos I have taken and some of the two of us as well.

Thankful for all the blessings and support we have from people such as you we are both eagerly awaiting Christmas and enjoying the hope that goes along with Advent. May you have a blessed advent season and a Merry Christmas as well. Joy to the World, the Lord has come!

In His service,
Andrew Menz

Sem Students—Continued

Dear Cross of Christ,

I must confess that I have allowed myself to do a bit of worrying over the last few weeks. As the U.S. dollar has weakened considerably against the English pound, coupled with our desire to travel a bit during term break, finances have brought a fair amount of anxiety. Amie and I have been laying our needs before the Lord and trying to trust that, as our Great Provider, He will take care of every one. You are indeed an answer to prayer.

We learned of your amazing efforts and diligent work recently and were dumbfounded by your great love. What an honor to know that so many of you poured hours and hours into planning, setting up, and working at the Antique Show. Not only that, but you dedicated the work to those outside your congregation. What an amazing act of love and generosity! You are truly a testimony of God's great work in the world.

Recently, we have been preparing for the end of my first term, here at Westfield House in Cambridge. Last week concluded my lectures at the Faculty of Divinity, and this week is our last week of in house classes. It has gone by so fast, and it is strange to think we have begun the Advent season already! Cambridge is well lit with beautiful Christmas lights, and I have been playing carols around town with the Cambridge Brass Band. We even performed our first concert last week.

I am enclosing some pictures of us, Westfield House, and Cambridge. I will also send them as digital files to Wendy.

Thank you again for your kind generosity, and great love.

Gratefully,
Ryan & Amie Winningham



Reminder: The deadline for the Cross Section is the 10th of the preceding month. Submit your information via email to newsletter@bloomfieldcross.org

COUPLE'S RETREAT OPPORTUNITY

Open Registration for the Couple's Retreat hosted by Faith, Troy is being taken until January 7th. The retreat will be January 26th–28th at the Best Western Valley Plaza Resort in Midland. The registration fee is \$100 and includes retreat materials, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and Sunday brunch. Faith's Couples' Retreat will inspire and equip you to grow in your marriage and in your relationship with God. For more information, contact Cindi and Dennis Martens at 586-725-2926 or call the church office at 248-689-4664. Scholarships are available—please see Pastor Jon!

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Dear Cross of Christ Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, volunteers and especially the patients who benefit from medical and dental care through the Gary Burnstein Community Health Clinic, thank you for your donation of \$4048.00. Your contribution will help support the hard and dedicated work of our volunteer staff.

Each year the Gary Burnstein Community Health Clinic continues to provide medical treatment to the uninsured along with the underinsured. We are proud to say that we have seen many lives changed for the better. In fact, two of our homeless patients recently told us “No insurance means no help” and “Lack of money and transportation are the biggest barriers. Getting to a pharmacy that carries the medication you need is one thing, but then having a dollar, one rotten darn dollar, can be challenging on occasions.” Fortunately, we were there to help them and now they are receiving the medical attention and prescriptions that they need.

The Gary Burnstein Community Health Clinic continues to make a difference in the lives of people and the community. Today, your support has made an immediate difference in the life of an individual without health care. Each dollar donated goes directly to assist and provide health care and medication to hundreds of people.

I am delighted to add you into our benefactors for this year.

Sincerely,
Brian J. Harris, Executive Director

Dear Missions Committee,

I was blessed to travel to Hoonah, Alaska this past summer on the mission trip sponsored through Cross of Christ, I discovered that it was through your mission committee that I was able to go so I wanted to express my gratitude. I am currently studying to be a pastor and would have been unable to travel without your support.

The whole experience confirmed to many others including myself just how amazing God is. The Lord through a series of events brought people together in His perfect way on His perfect timetable, which is so often last minute but always on time. Within just a couple of weeks of the trip, my sister, Julie Atwood, just happened to be sitting next to Juli Garretson when Juli spoke of her need for assistance on the Alaskan mission trip. She was blind at the time and was inquiring of someone that might assist her on the journey. The Lord put my name on my sister's heart as one that might be able to help and I believe as a result of Juli's close walk with and faith in the Lord, He did provide. My sister was led to ask me, I then sought the Lord and received confirmation. I spoke to Juli and she was excited yet there was a calm about her as if she knew it was all part of God's plan. Isn't she incredible?!!

On the mission trip itself we often heard the words “It's a God thing”. Events continually took place where even the unbeliever would have a tough time calling them mere coincidences. From the way the Lord would allow us to go through security with bags unchecked to how we were all able to attend a Hoonah tribal performance at the Cannery (one of the cruise ship stops) for free. The Lord opening many doors in Hoonah for us and allowed many seeds to be planted. One particular native even gave his heart to the Lord during the trip. Tears of joy were flowing as we all became attached to him throughout the week leading up to his conversion.

So I thank you for making this trip possible for Juli and myself I was truly blessed to be able to go and meet someone as special as Juli. We had a great time of fellowship in the Lord together and it turns out I only ran her into one wall. Actually, the case could be made that that wall encounter was really her fault. You'd have to ask her for the details though.

Thank you again for everything and remember to keep Hoonah, Alaska in your prayers as there is still much work to be done there.

Sincerely,
Mark Gill

Thank you for sharing with Crossroads the blessings that God has given you. Your prayers and financial gifts provide the loving support so desperately needed by those involved in an unplanned pregnancy.

**In Christ Alone,
Tim Stickel
Executive Director,
Crossroads
Pregnancy Center**

(this was a gift from the Antique Show proceeds)

Dear Friends and Partners in the Gospel!

It was a true joy to meet Wendy Scrimger and Don Berkemeier, Co-Chairmen for the 43rd Bloomfield Antique Show. I loved hearing their passion for the show and how God blessed the congregation's efforts for the success of the show.

The added bonus for me was when they presented a check for \$4,048.00 for the Hoonah Alaska Church Plant. The Church Plant will be part of the North West District of the LCMS, under the leadership of the Alaska Mission for Christ, an LCMS mission society and in coordination with Denali Lutheran Church, an LCMS member congregation. Originally the Church Plant was planned to start by Christmas 2006, but the revised time line is for June 1, 2007.

We're making a five year commitment to financially support this Church Plant. After that time, the congregation will need to be self-sustaining. Our financial projections for this Alaskan Church Plant are in the range of \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year, or \$750,000 to one million dollars over the five years. I'm honored and pleased that you too have caught the vision for a thriving church in Hoonah.

I-loonah is a community of nearly 900 people with almost 75% being native Tlingit (pronounced *clink-it*). Subsistence is a way of life in Hoonah and there are extremely few job opportunities in the community. Spiritual and social trails make this community ripe for the sowing of the seeds of the Gospel's compassion, forgiveness, hope, comfort and encouragement and by the power of the Holy Spirit is ready for fruitful harvest.

The work to be carried out by the missionary/church planter is to share the Gospel with all the people groups in I-loonah. This will be done through Word and Sacrament, worship, bible study, Christian care giving, and companionship. Also, the work of the ministry doesn't belong to the professional church work, but to the laity, so training people in care giving, like Stephen Ministers and sound theological training so they may teach others take a high place in this church plant.

Rick Twenhafel, Director of Ministry, Alaska Mission for Christ is going to be in Battle Creek over Christmas. He and I are getting together to be in prayer, the Word and conversation about the Hoonah Church Plant. It is with great anticipation that I look forward to the Lord's continued surprises surrounding this church plant.

Warmest regards in Christ,
Richard E. Webb, DCE, Minister of Outreach

Dear Friends of TEAM:

The Board of Managers and volunteers of The Emergency Assistance Ministry are indebted to you for the ongoing, generous financial support of this center's Ministry. You can be assured the \$1500.00 contribution is going directly to serve families and individuals within our area that are facing an eviction or another day without food, lights or heat. The fall months generate many requests from families with school age children who have lived without hot water or lights during the summer. When the chilly months arrive, we stretch our funds to help as many households as possible so the children can start their day with a healthy breakfast and in a positive environment.

The Birmingham/Bloomfield area is truly blessed to have your congregation. You demonstrate how compassion and kindness can make a difference. We appreciate the confidence you have shown in TEAM's ability to positively touch the lives of people struggling with a crisis.

On TEAM's behalf, please extend our thanks to all members of the Cross of Christ Lutheran Community for seeing the worthiness of this ministry. With your encouragement and prayers, our Inter-Faith coalition will continue to serve those in need so they feel God's loving presence.

God Bless,
Judy D. Moenck, T.E.A.M. Coordinator

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**Dear Pastor
Reusch,**

**On behalf of the
people we serve
globally,
Operation
Mobilization
would like to
thank you for
your partnership.
The Lord has
blessed it to
bring hope,
salvation and joy
to so many
people around
the world!**

**Rick Hicks,
President
Operation
Mobilization USA**

Thank You

To our dear friends in Christ,

During February we were on vacation and lost our dear friend Bart. We did not do anything that anyone else would not do and tried to comfort Jill as she experienced life changing moments those first faithful days.

When Pastor Jon suggested donations for us to go on another vacation, Bob and I said no way, it is not necessary, we were blessed already in our lives, and we do not need this. Let's give it to someone more deserving. We prayed and by suggestion of a friend who told us they had given for a specific cause once before and the recipient did not use it, they felt hurt. So, we decided to go to Los Angeles for Christmas.

It was a wonderful experience because we went to see Mickey Mouse and had a tour of Disneyland on Christmas which covered Walt Disney's ideas and dreams. We were volunteers working on the Lutheran Hour Rose Bowl float and actually helped with its final decorations. We placed small flowers and moss on the float at the beginning of the week, and at the completion, we helped with the bigger flowers. Of course, we went to the Rose Bowl parade, and Bob went golfing during the week.

We want to thank all of the wonderful Cross of Christ family that allowed us to afford this trip. We are truly blessed. We love everyone here and are so grateful to you all.

Kathy and Bob Dowbenko

Dear Lutheran Christian Friends,

Christmas greetings to you all in the mighty name of our precious Savior Jesus Christ! First of all, I want to express my words of thanks and appreciation to you all for your prayers. True, they have been effective. God always hears the prayers that His faithful servants made with a sincere heart. Before I left Haiti the results of the Echo-Doppler of the Carotids revealed that there was a "severe stenosis (75%) at the beginning of the left internal carotid." That was the limit of what the doctors could do for me in Haiti. Their recommendation to me was to go back to Miami to see a vascular surgeon as it was also recommended by my eye doctor. Consequently, I went to Jackson Memorial hospital through the emergency service. I was admitted after 24 hours of waiting. They kept me there for three full days because they had a lot of tests to do. By the grace of God, to their great surprise, among them all the echo-Doppler and the MRI results were normal. No need at this time for surgery!

I want all my prayer partners to acknowledge and admit that if I didn't go through surgery it is not because the problem wasn't real and very serious, but it is because of God's grace and immediate intervention, a quick positive answer to the faithful prayers of many of us. For, before I left Haiti, many brothers and sisters and friends in Christ and family members in Haiti, USA and Canada were praying for me, not only that God might grant me a successful surgery but that He might first and foremost prevent me from going through surgery. That that is what He did. May all of us praise His Holy Name!

Now, I want to express my words of thanks and appreciation to all the Members of the Board of Directors of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society—USA in whose hearts brotherly love has been actively manifested to vote positively that the society might help me with the greatest part of the total amount the hospital has charge me for everything.

On behalf of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, her daughter Churches, Christian Day Schools and other Christian and social workers, my family and myself, I wish you all a Joyful Christmas and a most Blessed Happy New Year. May the peace of the Lord be with each and every one of you always.

**Sincerely yours in the bond of Christ, the King of Kings,
Pastor Doris Jean Louis**

**Dear
Congregation of
Cross of Christ
Lutheran Church,**

**I have driven the
Telegraph
corridor on my
way to work for
many years.
During my
commute, I have
had the pleasure
of enjoying your
beautiful nativity
scene! How
wonderful and
what a blessing
it has been to
me!**

**Merry Christmas!
Judith Gracey**

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: PRAY, SEND CARDS

NEW MEMBERS

Sarah Smith (by transfer)
2672 Elmwood St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
248-506-3303

Lillian Spellicy
Sunrise Assisted Living of
Bloomfield
2080 South Telegraph Road,
#320A
Bloomfield Hills,
Michigan 48302

MILITARY:

LCPL Gruits, M.W.T and Jena
1919 Swamp Fox Trail
Beaufort, SC 29906

Douglas Quitmeyer;
rgrdoug@comcast.net

SHUT-INS

Richard Robb, Farmington
Health Care Center, 34225
Grand River, Farmington, MI
48335-3440

Jan Hartman, Sunrise of West
Bloomfield, 7005 Pontiac Trl,
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

Edna Foss
Waltonwood Retirement
Living, 3450 West 13 Mile
Rd, Royal Oak, MI 48073

Glen Schultz, Campbell
Nursing Home, 1900
Lakeville Rd, Leonard MI
48367

JANUARY CHURCH CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

ONGOING EVENTS

SUNDAYS

8:15 Adult Bible Study
9:30 am SonLight City
9:30am Worship
11:15am Worship

MONDAYS

10am Adult Bible Study

TUESDAYS

7am Men's Bible Breakfast
10am Adult Bible Study

11:45 Primetimers (1/2)
12:30 International Friends
5:45pm Prayer Time
7pm Volleyball

WEDNESDAYS

4:30 4C's Rehearsal (starts
1/10)
5:30 Church dinner
6:15 Griefshare Support Group
6:30 Worship

THURSDAYS

12:30 International Friends
7:00 (1/18) Messianic Friend-
ship Group

FRIDAYS

6p Scrapbook Outreach (1/5)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Fred Korzon	1/1	Gary Schaefer	1/10	Jonah Suitt	1/21
Dan Santiago	1/1	Kathryn Streng	1/10	Nancy McMahon	1/22
James Sherk	1/2	Brad Lampkin	1/11	Betty Daykin	1/23
Marlene Loucks	1/3	Timothy Peacock	1/11	David Kesh	1/25
Charles Neiderprim	1/3	Shirley Beeman	1/12	Julie Weeks	1/25
Teresa Serowoky	1/3	Trycia Barnes	1/14	Ginny Hoke	1/26
Dick Bland	1/4	Lauren Balagna	1/15	Adam Novack	1/26
Nicholas Wilkie	1/5	Christopher Duggins	1/15	Robert Brown	1/29
Juli Garretson	1/6	Carol Powrie	1/16	Chase Zaidan	1/29
Jeffrey Johnson	1/6	Amani Kodi	1/17	Breanna Dionne	1/30
John Reusch	1/6	Jeff Marchione	1/17	Allison Moss	1/30
Griffen Duggins	1/7	Noah Jendrowski	1/18	Kristin Ulmer	1/30
Jennifer Markel	1/7	Thomas Milz	1/18	Christina Davenport	1/31
Creighton Weber	1/7	Bill Johnson	1/19	Wilma Jed	1/31
Janice Bachman	1/8	Will Miller	1/19	Eric Lorey	1/31
Mickey Wilkinson	1/9	Sue Grunewald	1/20	Amanda Winchester	1/31
Aaron Ollila	1/10	Steve Kirschbaum	1/20		
Kylie Powrie	1/10	Allie Grafe	1/21		

CALENDAR ON THE WEB!

Go to
www.bloomfieldcross.org and
click on the
"Calendar" link to
the right side of
the home page.



THE INTRODUCTION

On a bright Sunday morning several years ago, my husband, Paul, who did not attend church, asked when services began. I was so thrilled that I slipped into a closet and whispered “Hallelujah!”

As soon as we entered the church, I bragged to everyone, “Meet my husband, Paul!” Paul was embarrassed as I dragged him down the aisle to my favorite pew, announcing his presence. Despite my behavior, Paul did visit again. Since then I have learned how to be more sensitive when bringing a newcomer to church.

Introduce my guest to only a few friends. A guest needs to feel comfortable, as though he belongs, so a few simple introductions are appropriate.

Let him choose a seat. Invite my visitor to choose where he would like to sit instead of following me to the place where I belong and he may not.

Be gracious. Don't let familiarity with friends or the situation distract me. Focus on worship and my guest's needs.

Pray that the Lord will prepare my guest's heart to receive God's love. Listen to what God is saying to me—not what He might be saying to my guest.

God is in control. Even if a guest is doodling in his bulletin or reading in the book of Matthew when the pastor is in Jeremiah, I must trust that God's Spirit is working.

Be ready. Don't debate over the sermon but keep the conversation light on the way home. I will love and accept him right where he is, and be ready to answer questions.

Be patient. Maybe the guest will start regularly attending church. But this may be the beginning of an investigative journey with occasional visits. Either way, I have to rest in the knowledge that God's timing is perfect.

Ushering loved ones into the kingdom is a privilege. A friend or family member taking his first steps toward rededication or salvation needs to be handled with care. Now when I bring guests to church, I pray, “Lord, help me remember I'm responsible for the love and care of others and You're responsible for the results.”

Excerpt from Focus on the Family, December 2006 by Karen Strand



**Reaching Beyond
Our Walls**

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

1100 Lone Pine Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Phone: 248-646-5886

Fax: 248-646-5968

Email: info@bloomfieldcross.org

REV. JON W. REUSCH,
SENIOR PASTOR

REV. JAMES ACKERMAN,
ASSISTANT PASTOR

REV. STEPHEN GRAFE,
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

BETH KALUSNIAK, CO-EDITOR

KAREN MILLER, CO-EDITOR

KIM STEIN, DISTRIBUTION