



NEW LIFE NEWS

New Life is a church of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Volume 10, Issue 11

November 2004

LCMS NEWS

All 10 Synod schools make U.S. News `best` lists For the fourth year in a row, U.S. News and World Report has included all 10 LCMS colleges and universities in its "America's Best Colleges" issue.

Task force to offer guidelines on women's service Guidelines should be available by the end of January for implementing in congregations a Synod convention action that permits women to hold any congregational office that does not involve the exercise of distinctive functions of the pastoral office.

LCMS congregations report membership of 2,488,936 Although statistics that Synod congregations reported for the end of 2003 show a rise in contributions and "weekday religion-class" attendance, "the real story is that membership is still declining," according Dr. John O'Hara, research analyst for the Synod.

Baptized membership for the year, based on reports from 74 percent of LCMS congregations, stood at 2,488,936, or 23,778 fewer than for 2002.

That reflects a slight slowdown from the 27,331 decline in the baptized membership from 2001 to 2002.

The number of confirmed members reported for 2003 stood at 1,894,822, or 13,101 fewer than reported for 2002, which posted a decline of 13,026 from 2001.

- www.lcms.org -

Inside this issue:

A Time for Thanksgiving	1-2
Looking into the Road Ahead	3
Praise Band	4
Rim Shots	5
Groups Ablaze! SG(2) Seminar	6
Calendar	7

From The Pastor's Heart: A Time For Thanksgiving!

*At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal,
Joshua 8:30 (ESV)*

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF JOSHUA IS AN EXCITING RECOUNTING OF GOD'S GIVING the Israelites victory over Ai! Ai had been the symbol of failure and faithlessness. God had then brought about "reformation:" Pointing out to the Israelites what stood between them and Himself, empowering them to recognize and confess their shortcomings to God, helping them to forsake their sin, and renewing their lives by His grace so once again they could stand in joyful relationship with the Father. Ai now became the symbol of God's victory over sin in our lives.

God's Word continues: "And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land." Joshua 8:1 (ESV) By God's direction, Joshua used astute military maneuvers of feigned defeat and ambush, and led Israel to total and complete victory over Ai. Lost ground had been regained. A valuable spiritual lesson had been taught. Sin had been purged and forgiven. God was once again able to effectively use His people to accomplish His will. And here they solidly stood in God's promised land of Canaan, "a land flowing with milk and honey."

In thanksgiving to God, the Israelites built a monument to acknowledge God's undeserved blessings and their willing response to His love. This monument was actually the 4th monument that had been built in the land of conquest. The 1st was made of the 12 stones taken from the middle of the Jordan (Joshua 4:20), commemorating God's miraculously bringing them into the Promised Land; the 2nd was the pile of stones raised over Achan (Joshua 7:26) commemorating God's "reformation" in their lives; the 3rd was the great heap of stones raised at Ai's city gate (Joshua 8:29) commemorating God's victory.

Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord of "uncut stones" on Mount Ebal, the mount associated with the covenantal curses. Disobedience condemns us to receive God's curse, because "without holiness no one will see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14 (NIV) But here God also desired to signify how He graciously deals with repentant sinners, for on the altar were offered the sacrifices of reconciliation and unity with God, sacrifices foreshadowing Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. The sentence of the law was passed on to our Substitute: "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh," Romans 8:3 (ESV) We through Christ have been delivered from our bondage to the law!

Joshua then wrote God's law on "large [plastered] stones." He read God's law, the curses, the blessings; and the Israelites made it their own by responding with "Amen!" In thankful recognition to God, not only were God's people writing God's revealed will on stone, but also on their hearts. They joyfully desired in view of all of God's goodness to make every effort to be holy and pleasing to God.

Today, what "monuments of thanksgiving" to God have you set up in your life? Thank Him for bringing you to faith in Christ Jesus! Thank Him for forgiveness! Thank Him for bringing you into the Promised Land of eternal life! Thank Him for the hard but invaluable spiritual lessons you have learned! Thank Him for His never giving up on you! Thank Him for His victories big and small in your life! And most importantly, thank Him with the monument of a heart that continually beats with the passionate desire to please God with our whole life! Then you will thank Him with your actions, praying for the "pre-Christians" you know, seeking God's wisdom to share the Gospel with them, and then bringing them to church! As God uses you to help people come to faith, these new saints will be the most beautiful monuments ever of your sincere thanks!

May God bless you this month with an awesome *monumental Thanksgiving* for Him!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Chip <><

牧師的心聲: 一個感恩的時候

那時，約書亞在以巴路山上為耶和華以色列的上帝築一座壇，約書亞 8:30

約書亞第八章是一次興奮的重述上帝使以色列人在艾城的得勝！艾城曾經象徵失敗和失望。當時上帝曾經使之“改革：”指出以色列人與祂之間的障礙物是什麼，使他們能夠察覺和承認他們的對上帝虧欠，幫助他們離棄罪惡，因為祂的恩典使他們的生命得以更新，所以他們再次能夠與父上帝有個歡欣的關係。現在的艾城已成為我們生命中的罪已經被上帝之得勝的象徵。

聖經繼續說：“耶和華對約書亞說：「不要懼怕，也不要驚惶。你起來，率領一切兵丁上艾城去，我已經把艾城的王和他的民、他的城，並他的地，都交在你手裡。」約書亞8:1 在上帝的指導下，約書亞用靈敏的軍事作戰行動，以假裝打敗和埋伏，帶領以色列人全然徹底的得勝了艾城，重拾失地。領受了一堂寶貴屬靈的功課，罪被潔淨和赦免了，上帝再一次可以有效地使用祂的百姓去完成祂的旨意了。於是，在這裡他們能堅固地站在上帝所應許的那“流奶與蜜”之迦南地。

為表示向上帝感恩，以色列人築了一座紀念壇來感謝上帝所賜那不配得的恩典，並且樂意地回應祂的愛。這壇實際上是第四座被建築在征服地的紀念壇。第一座是從約旦河中取來的那十二塊石頭所築的壇。（書4:20）為紀念上帝奇蹟的帶領他們進入那應許之地；第二座是他們在亞干的身上堆成的一大堆石頭。（書7:26）來紀念上帝在他們生命中的“改革”：第三座是在艾的城門口堆積在屍首上的一大堆石頭，（書8:29）為紀念上帝完完全全的得勝。

現在約書亞在以巴路山為上帝築了一座“未琢石”的壇，這山與聖約的詛咒有關聯。不服從將判定我們受到上帝的詛咒，因為“非聖潔沒有人能見主。”來12:14 然而，在此上帝也渴望向人表示祂是多麼恩慈地對待悔改的罪人，為了與上帝復合及和好、在祭壇獻上的祭物，是預示基督要在十字架上為犧牲的祭。因基督的代贖那律法的定罪已經過去了：“律法既因肉體軟弱，有所不能行的，神就差遣自己的兒子，成為罪身的形狀，作了贖罪祭，在肉體中定了罪案，”羅8:3 藉著基督我們已經從律法的捆綁中得到了釋放！

然後約書亞把上帝的律法抄寫在“壇上石灰的大石頭上”。他宣讀了上帝的咒詛和祝福的律法，以色列人領受了且回應說“阿們”！為了感謝上帝，祂的子民不僅把祂的心意寫在石頭上，也刻在心上。由於他們歡欣渴望地看到上帝的良善，便盡情地努力成為聖潔和討上帝的喜悅。

今天，你的生命中建立了什麼“感恩的紀念碑”？為祂領你相信耶穌基督感恩！為祂的饒恕感恩！為祂帶領你進入永生的應許之地感恩！為那雖艱難但曾學到無價之屬靈的功課感恩！最重要的是以一個不斷、熱心地渴望在全生活中要討上帝喜悅之心來感謝祂！並以行動先為人代禱，求上帝使用你，把握機會分享基督，將他們帶到主的教會來。那被你帶入天堂的信徒是多美的紀念啊！他們將成為你前所未有的向上帝感恩之最美的紀念碑！願上帝祝福你有個極其紀念性的感恩節！

在主愛裡的
傅昌黎牧師<><

Looking to the Road Ahead at New Life

By Tim Tam



On September 26, 2004, New Life celebrated Education Sunday by honoring all our Small Group, Fellowship, and Sunday School leaders. It was a very special day as we gave thanks and praise to God for their collective service to our Lord through the vital ministry of leading and teaching at New Life. While we spent some time reflecting on the past, we also asked our leaders to help seek clarity in God's will for New Life in 2005 and beyond. With the help of a survey provided by Church Smart Resources, 30 leaders/members were asked to candidly provide answers about their spiritual journey at New Life. This only marks the beginning, as there will be follow on meetings to review the survey results, interpret the results, and put some concrete plans in place after prayerfully considering what God reveals to us through this process.

The next meeting will be Saturday, December 4, 2004 (9am - 4pm). We are expecting the support and guidance of two distinguished individuals with substantial experience in leading churches to realize their specific mission in doing the work of sharing the Gospel.

Rev. Ed Krueger, Mission Executive, CNH District LCMS

Rev. David G. Poedel, Regional Assistant to the President/Bishop: Western Region Missions, English District, LCMS

Leading up to this follow on meeting for our leaders, we ask for your prayer requests that:

- 1) Each leader that participated in the survey would make it a priority to attend the follow up meeting
- 2) The Lord would provide clarity on his will for New Life through his servants, Rev. Ed Krueger, Rev. David Poedel, and Rev. Chip Fox
- 3) Each leader prayerfully consider their role in advancing New Life's mission
- 4) Give thanks to God that Rev. Ed Krueger and Rev. David Poedel have made New Life a priority and will spend that weekend with us

Rev. David Poedel is also planning to be our guest preacher on Sunday, December 5, 2004.

Praise Band

By Bryan Chan

In February of this year, New Life started a praise band aimed at worshipping God with contemporary music in an environment where everybody had a passion for music. We started with the few guitars we had, whether they were classical, flamenco, electric, or acoustic, and moved ahead from there.

The beginning practices were focused on guitar basics, the parts of the guitar, how to tune, the names of the strings, and most importantly, how to play. From simple open chords to hand wrenching bar chords, everybody diligently worked on learning the techniques required to play the music. In as little as a few months, we had a veritable group of solid guitar players! I want to mention Matthew Lauretta and Corey Chang as being exceptional in how quickly they improved their skills. Eventually, almost every member bought their own guitars because they had outgrown the ones they were using!

The band is a great place to try out new instruments where people can give advice and tips and everyone is supportive. Recently we have had people move into other instruments to compliment the bevy of guitars. David Fox and Jason Lum have learned how to play bass and are quite adept at it. David is especially enthusiastic about playing bass guitar and really has a rockin' rhythm! Matthew Yee and Jason Lum have also played keyboards for some practices and it really adds a fullness to the music. I'm sure playing our free flowing contemporary music is a pleasant difference from the delicate precision required of classical music.

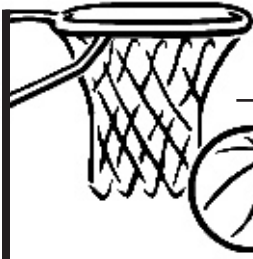
The praise band is continuing to expand with new people attending to express their interest. Justin Lum has been a great help in this area with his guitar experience. I believe he and Jason are the only two people that have taken official guitar lessons! Justin has been instructing those who may have missed a lesson or two and his teaching ability is outstanding. Even now, as we receive new members, Justin is right there to teach them the basics.

I continue to pray to see where God wants to take the praise band. I don't have set goals or expectations for us except to have fun and feel the presence of the Lord when we perform. I sense that because of our rapid expansion, we will need to create another group for those who want to learn or refresh, and a group for those who just want to play the music. I hope to be able to work out the logistics soon, so we can continue to move forward at the same pace. I'm hoping when we become established, people from outside the church will be interested in attending to learn an instrument, play music with us, or just listen. Also, if we are able to incorporate a song every week in our worship service, I believe we could add a dash of spice to our morning.

The praise band needs your continual prayers. We have plenty of enthusiasm, but we are still short on resources. The concensus of our group is that we definitely want a drum set as the next instrument we want to incorporate. We also need more singers as well, so if any of you love to sing and want to learn new songs, please join us on Saturdays. We are always open to receiving equipment as well, such as amplifiers, microphones, and even old instruments. Most importantly, please remember to keep us in your prayers. Pray that God will lead us in a direction that will glorify His name.

I am thankful that God has given New Life this opportunity for fellowship and outreach. Join us on Saturdays and see for yourself the beginnings of a God inspired worship team!





RIM SHOTS by Samuel Chang

Some of you might be curious as to what we do during our basketball practice. We usually gather together in a circle and have a few announcements. Then, we have a short devotion, followed by some drills. We try to work on some plays and then we usually split up into teams and have scrimmage games until everyone is too tired to go on.

Here's one of the devotions that we shared during the past year:

P O P C O R N
P E O P L E

Popcorn – everybody seems to love it. The town of Valparaiso, Indiana, has a popcorn festival every fall. The floats in the parade use popcorn as decoration. Popcorn machines are found on nearly every downtown street corner. The newspaper prints popcorn recipes. And people enjoy arts and crafts fair with popcorn as the theme.

The funny thing about popcorn is that it looks just like tiny cobs of regular sweet corn, although we can't eat it that way. Only when the hard, dry kernels are heated do they "explode" and become light, fluffy, and delicious. What a surprise it must have been the first time someone tried to cook popcorn. Imagine the look on everyone's face when it burst into those little, fluffy things!

Popcorn reminds us of the saying: "You can't judge a book by its cover." In other words, you can't tell what is inside a book just by looking at the outside. The saying is true for people too. You can't judge what a person is like by what shows on the outside. Someone from a different background might seem strange at first. Or a person who is shy might seem unfriendly. But maybe they are popcorn people, just waiting to get warmed up!

Jesus told us not to judge others but to love them as God loves us. Only God can know what's inside our heart and mind. And only God knows who believes in Jesus as Savior.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." Luke 6:37

Little Visits, Volume 1

Groups Ablaze! (SG)2 Seminar

by Justin Lum

If 75 million people formed their own country, they would already have a greater population than Great Britain, France, and South Korea. 75 million – that’s also the current number of unchurched Americans. In California alone, almost 7 million people claim to be affiliated with no religion at all. Enter: (SG)2. (SG)2 somehow stands for Strategic Growth through Small Groups. It is a training program of Missions International aimed to reach out to unchurched people through conversion growth. This program has been effectively and successfully implemented all over North America, South America, Asia and Africa. It is a tool being used to help reach 100 million people by the year 2017, an ambitious goal set forth by LCMS World Mission.

The two-day seminar, sponsored by CNH, was held at Cupertino in October. There was a lot to be learned through the speakers, the participant’s guide, and the group sharing. The main focus of the seminar was to help churches grow through the use of small groups. The key to a successful small group rides on four key factors – 1) the prayer life of the small group leader, 2) the loving relationships among members of the small group, 3) the focused outreach of the group, and 4) the empowerment of the leaders. A survey that I took showed that of those four factors, New Life small groups rated the highest in loving relationships, followed by focused outreach, praying leadership, and lastly, empowering leadership. This could mean many things but these are the areas the (SG)2 seminar was designed to help with.

The seminar was split into eight modules ranging from the usage of conversation bridges to peer coaching. The one that stuck out for me was one on creating evangelistic groups based on common interests – a good example of that being New Life’s basketball fellowship. This means creating a small group based on your interests and hobbies but at the same time, allowing for opportunities to introduce your faith to the non-Christians in the group. One of the speakers mentioned that many churches are growing through this type of outreach. And as a personal example, his church has created one small group that rides motorcycles and one that smokes cigars! Having New Life go forward with a cigar smoking fellowship is certainly questionable but it serves as a reminder for us to not be afraid of trying new things and know that God works in amazing ways.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S



We welcome the newest member of our New Life family, **Erika Carolyn Tam**, daughter of Patty and Tim Tam, who was baptized on October 24th. May she be remembered in our prayers as she grows in the family of God.





P.O. Box 16648 S.F., CA 94116
Address Correction Requested



November
2004



NEW LIFE NEWS is a monthly newsletter, communicating the vision and mission of New Life Chinese Lutheran Church in San Francisco, California. The **VISION** of New Life Chinese Lutheran Church is to bring the life-changing word of God to its community and to care for and nurture all those that hear it. As a spiritual family, we shall edify those in our fellowship and reach out to the unchurched. In so doing, we will teach, train, and equip new disciples to grow in their faith through Bible study, witnessing, service, and missions.

The **MISSION** of New Life Chinese Lutheran Church is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Our primary mission is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the unchurched community, disciple them in the body of Christ, and equip them for Christian service and spiritual leadership through Christ-centered worship and Bible study groups.

NEW LIFE CHINESE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Worship at Shepherd of the Hills - 395 Addison Street, San Francisco
Phone: (415) 586-6525 Fax: (415) 586-6526
www.newlifechinese.org

Please submit December newsletter
by Monday, November 22nd.
(HumibeeMel@yahoo.com)
contributions to Melissa Lau

NEW LIFE NEWS
November 2004
Volume 10, Issue 11
Editor & Designer
Melissa Lau
Chinese Translators
Gail Wong
Hannah Fox
Virginia Lam

