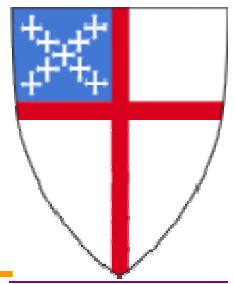


St. Luke's Episcopal Church

"Heaven in the Hills"

Newsletter—January 2010



From Our Vicar...

Who Is This Jesus Anyway?

The question seems to be one that will never go away. From the time he was born the efforts to discredit or destroy him began. It started with King Herod when the Magi came to see him as they were seeking the Christ Child. As we know, the Magi were not deceived by Herod's efforts and were still able to go and worship the Baby Jesus. This scriptural event marks the beginning of the answers to the question of the person of Jesus. The coming of the Magi is the first of three important "manifestations" of Jesus as the Messiah and God Incarnate.

The next important event in the answer, which was also included in the original celebration of Epiphany, is the Baptism of Jesus. Here He is first manifested as the Son of God as The Father announces that this is His Son in whom He is well pleased.

The third scriptural event of the original Epiphany celebration which answers the question of who Jesus is comes in the manifestation of Jesus as deity to His disciples. This occurs through His first miracle when He changes water into wine at the wedding at Cana.

The season of Epiphany and the feast day itself is all about answering the question "Who is this Jesus anyway?" Our celebration of the feast of the Epiphany at St. Luke's was a surprise and a most delightful occasion. It was a surprise since it was celebrated at our 11:00 am Wednesday service and expectations of attendance were not too high, to say the least. As it turned out, we ended up with a contingent equal to nearly any Sunday morning early service which was most unusual for a mid-week morning service. It was a delight as the liturgy transformed the worshiper's last day of Christmas into a taste of the glory of God.

The feast day of Epiphany has held a place of importance in celebrations of the church that was far and above the Christmas celebration for some fourteen hundred years. To this day it is still held in higher regard than Christmas in some Eastern Orthodox churches. The prominence that the Feast of the Incarnation (Christmas) has today did not really develop until the adoption of the Christmas tree tradition of Germany by England and the publication of Charles Dickens's story "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" in the early 1800's.

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Expressing Our Love for Mae & Bitsy

Sally Smith and Don Gray recently teamed up to combine their talents with a gift to St. Luke's to honor Mae Hernlund and Bitsy Hagemeyer. Don built two bird houses (up to "code", of course) and Sally offered to use her talents to paint them to honor Mae and Bitsy. Mae's birdhouse is now finished and Bitsy's will be finished soon. The birdhouses will be hung at the Church for God's birds to enjoy.



Important Dates

- Every Tuesday AM: Women's Bible Study, 9:30 AM in Swope Hall
- January 17: Compassion International speaker at Christian Education, Swope Hall, 9 AM
- January 20: Mission Committee Meeting, 6:30 PM, Swope Hall
- January 24: Bring donation of blankets and warm clothing to Swope Hall for those of need in Piedras Negras.
- January 25: Bishops Committee Meeting, 5 PM at Swope Hall, all are welcome.

Important Websites

A Wealth of Good Info...

St. Luke's website can be found at <http://www.stlukes-cm.org/>. At the website you will find Daily Devotionals, this month's Church newsletter, archived newsletters, minutes from Bishop's Committee meetings, and much, much more. The Diocesan website is found at <http://www.dwtx.org>

“Greeter” Schedule for Upcoming Weeks

Greeters are being asked to provide a head count for Total Congregation Attendance (including children). There is pad on the organ to write the number in the congregation & place in the collection plate. Greeters are expected to take up the Collection. If you'd like to serve as a Greeter, please contact Joe McShane @ 512-261-6780 to be added to the list. **We could use two more greeters.** With 8 or 9 greeters available, each would serve only once every two months or so.

| Dates | Service | Greeter | Phone |
|------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1/10/10 | 10:15 | Jorn Budde | 830-825-3003 |
| 1/17/10 | 10:15 | Don Gray | 512-261-6780 |
| 1/24/10 | 10:15 | Rick Shroeter | 830-832-5848 |
| 1/31/10 | 10:15 | Joe McShane | 262-844-6171 |
| 2/7/10 | 10:15 | David Greene | 830-832-5848 |
| 2/14/10 | 10:15 | Ladd Smith | 262-844-6171 |
| Substitute | | Mike Kelley | 830-825-3490 |
| All dates | 8 AM | Fielding Reiner | 830-285-3335 |

Bishop's Committee Update

Several members of the Bishop's Committee's terms expired in December. These include Liz Manning (had served as our Senior Warden, Tom Peterson, Betsy Stephenson, and Thomas Summers). Sandy Hodges is now serving as our Senior Warden, and Christie Schroeter, Jorn Budde and Jim Furber have replaced Tom, Betsy and Thomas. The next Bishop's Committee meeting will occur on January 25th, 5 PM, in Swope Hall. All are always welcome to attend.

The Bishop's Committee now consists of the following:

Christi Schroeter -- cypress@hillcountry.net
 Don Gray (Secretary) -- donaldkgray@gmail.com
 David Greene (Junior Warden) -- dwgreene@coopper.net
 Frana Keith -- fkeith6@gmail.com
 Sandy Hodges (Senior Warden) - scrofts@windstream.net
 Jim Furber -- jimf@texas-skies.com
 Marie McShane -- mmcsh56309@aol.com
 Jorn Budde -- jibudde@aol.com
 Fielding Reiner -- reiner@moment.net

St. Luke's Worship Services

Wednesday –Morning Prayer at 9 AM, Holy Eucharist at 11 AM;

Sundays - Holy Eucharist (no music) at 8 AM, Holy Eucharist w/music at 10:15 AM

Morning Prayer on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00 AM

Compassion International Speaker at Christian Education on January 17

Beth Preston's friend, Betsy Kernahan, will be presenting the mission opportunity Compassion International during Christian Education (9 AM) on Jan. 17. Compassion International exists as a Christian child advocacy ministry that releases children from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty and enables them to become responsible, fulfilled Christian adults.

Founded by the Rev. Everett Swanson in 1952, Compassion began providing Korean War orphans with food, shelter, education and health care, as well as Christian training.

Annual Parish Meeting Recap

St. Luke's annual meeting was held on December 6. At the meeting it was announced that Sandy Hodges would become the Senior Warden on January 1. David Manning and Lonnie Ragsdale are to serve as our delegates to the Diocesan Council, with Liz Manning and Monique Ragsdale serving as their alternates. St. Luke's financial report was reviewed with everyone and it showed that the Church is operating in the black and with substantial reserves.

Altar Guild Schedule

- 1/3 - Gail Moreman, Sally Smith & Candy Falatko
- 1/10 - Paula Sumners, Sandi Burleson & Linda Appleton
- 1/17 - Sandy Hodges, Doreen Budde & Sue Peterson
- 1/24 - Rita Reiner & Connie Bye
- 1/31 - Gail Moreman

Lay Reader/Acolyte Schedule

| | Lay Reader 8 AM | Lay Reader 10:15 AM | Acolyte 10:15 AM |
|--------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Jan 17 | Amy | Mike | Christie |
| Jan 24 | Liz | Pat | David M. |
| Jan 31 | John | Thomas | None re- quired |
| Feb 7 | David G. | Monique | Joseph |
| Feb 14 | Frana | Marie | Thomas |

Important Contacts...

Vicar - Tommy Bye 817-308-5850 ; Email: byetommy@yahoo.com
Bishop's Warden - Sandy Hodges 512-663-9745; Email: scrofts@windstream.net
Church Office - 830-825-8001

How'd You Get to St. Luke's? (Part 1)

On 10/18/09, Bishop David Reed asked "How you get to St. Luke's?", and he was not referring to the road name or mode of transportation. Here's a response from Connie Bye to his question. Feel free to send your response to the Bishop's question to Don Gray for future newsletters. DonaldkGray@gmail.com

My immediate answer is that I had noticed the Episcopal church sign on Hwy. 281 for years and been curious. Or I could remember friends of Tommy's parents talking many years ago of a country church we should all visit. I had moved to Marble Falls and was looking for a church, found St. Luke's and felt right at home immediately. Those things are all true.

However, in the perfect hindsight that only God can bring to me, I know that it was my time to be here. Here in my home in the country we have had since we first married, I have time to sit at the altar on the property and watch the sunsets each evening with my lab, time to have the solitude and beauty in my drive to church, and time to come into the holy space of St. Luke's. My loving God knew that this was the place for me to heal from great losses resulting from the death of two brothers and my father. He answered prayers before they were spoken. During the long grieving of the first two deaths and taking care of my other brother that was dying, Tommy remarked that I seemed most like myself on Sundays at church. I hadn't realized that but had to admit it was true. Coming to worship with you all on Sundays lifted my spirits so and carried me through by far the hardest period in my life.

Now, especially since this last January, I feel renewed and hope to bring all my love and energy to the people of St. Luke's.

-Connie Bye

(Part 2 is found on page 10)

Christmas Caroling

Twelve "St. Luker's" gathered on December 20 to go caroling. The group met at the church to rehearse for a bit and then headed out to rest homes in Johnson City and Marble Falls. The carolers included guitar players Mike Kelley and Thomas Sumners, and carolers Rick Schroeter, Sandy Hodges, Glen and Beth Preston, Connie and Tommy Bye, Sally Smith, and Rita Reiner. Afterward the group gathered at the Sumners house to enjoy tortilla soup and fellowship. They were joined by Ladd Smith and Tom and Sue Peterson.

Children's Sunday School

In December our children made wonderful icons from Christmas cards attached to black painted plaques to be hung in their room. They worked so carefully and were very proud of their work. A couple of them missed that Sunday and will make theirs sometime this month. A beautiful book of Icons will be available for them to look and an information sheet explaining icons will be sent home. This will, hopefully, be the beginning of their icon collection. Having holy things, crosses, icons, prayer books, etc. in their room encourage children to have private prayer time .

A gift of \$40 was given towards Sunday school supplies. This month the children will make their own Anglican prayer beads, similar to rosaries, and come home with instructions.

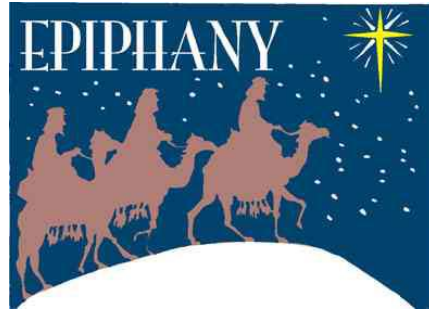
New education materials that follow the church lectionary readings will be used this spring. Our children need help in remembering to take home what they worked on in Sunday School.

We look forward to seeing all the little shining faces of St. Luke's children.

January Teacher Schedule

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| January 3 | Linda Appleton |
| January 10 | Connie Bye |
| January 17 | Carol Cole |
| January 24 | Sue Peterson & Mae Hernlund |
| January 31 | Ann Bond & Sally Smith |





Epiphany At St. Luke's

Epiphany is one of three major Christian celebrations along with Christmas and Easter. It is celebrated by most Christians on January 6 to commemorate the presentation of the infant Jesus to the Magi, or three wise men.

Epiphany is derived from the Greek “epiphaneia” and means manifestation or to appear. In a religious context, the term describes the appearance of an invisible divine being in a visible form. “Epiphany” means “showing forth,” and the feast commemorates the first showing forth of Christ to the world, when His presence was revealed to the three Magi.

The celebration of the Epiphany began in the Eastern Church and included a celebration of Christ's birth. However, by the 4th century C. E., the various calendar reforms had moved the birth of Christ to December 25 and the church in Rome began celebrating January 6 as Epiphany.

In the season of Epiphany we:

- 1 remember the revelation of Christ to John the Baptist, to the disciples, and to all Christians.
- 2 remember Christ's baptism and our own, together with the ways in which Christ was revealed to humankind, especially in the healing miracles.
- 3 ponder the ways in which we ourselves are called to bring Christ to the world.

The predominant symbol of the season is Light—the light from the Star of Bethlehem and the Light of Christ spreading throughout the world. The liturgical color of Epiphany is green.

The number of Sundays in the Epiphany season varies from four to nine according to the date of Easter Sunday (which is a movable feast derived from the lunar calendar). This year, 2010, there are six. So you will see green altar cloth and green vestments every Sunday January 10 through February 14 (the last Sunday in Epiphany).

St. Luke's held an Epiphany service on January 6 this year. The service was well attended (see photo below).



“Mission Efforts”

Mission Committee meeting set for January 20, 6:30, Swope Hall

Much has happened since early last spring when this committee first met to consider our involvement in Piedras Negras and our sister church in San Antonio, Santa Fe Episcopal. However, we are in a new year now and it is time to bring our committee together again for serious planning. Those that signed up last spring and those of you who have become interested since then, please try to attend our upcoming meeting.

Our Piedras Negras mission effort was given an anonymous gift of approximately \$2,000 recently. This wonderful gift will certainly boost our mission efforts this year. Also, support both financially and personally from our church community reconfirms that we are moving in the right direction. We will continue our sewing missions, moving the women in the community in the direction of earning income. Since most are beginners, they will need workshops throughout the year. Thankfully though we have ample new machines for them to work on. We are tentatively looking at the first weekend in February for another mission trip since January is very busy for the church in Piedras Negras.

During January the Seminary of the Southwest, a church in Victoria, and St. Luke's, along with the Burnet Episcopal church, will be in Piedras Negras on three different weekends to work on building projects. St. Luke's is looking at three dwellings that need flooring, walls and roof work (see article blow). There is a great need to help these families stay warm and dry during winter. Continue to bring blankets from home or shop for used or new blankets. Father Miguel said that most of the blankets sent last time were used for doors in their dwellings. So, the need is still great for blankets and warm clothing of all sizes.

Last spring, we had talked of targeting a family in our church area that we could help throughout the year. That interest never developed so please also be thinking of this idea or other mission projects to bring before the committee meeting. But mostly.....bring yourself.

Look for the January issue of The Church News from the Diocese of West Texas for a mention of our Piedras Negras Sewing Mission.

Piedras Negras “Habitat” Trip—Last Week of January

Volunteers from St. Luke's, headed by David Manning, will be doing habitat work in Piedras Negras the last week of January for four to five days. Please contact David if you are available for anytime that week, all the days or just a couple. Help is needed!!!

Donations of Blankets and Warm Clothing for Piedras Negras

Please bring donations of blankets and warm clothing to Swope Hall on Sunday, January 24th to help those in dire need.



With Christ in the New Year

It's a time of adventure!
A time to explore,
A time to open a brand-new door.
Up 'til now, you've just lived, but there's
so much more!

I've been with you always,
My power I've shown.
Now I'll show you new things
That you've never known,
Until you're amazed at how much
you've grown.

So follow Me with abandon,
Take a leap and dive.
Don't worry; I'll catch you;
You'll wake up alive.
Just let go of the wheel, and let Me
drive!

Take My hand and I'll lead you,
Come along for the ride
And ignore those queasy, uneasy in-
sides.
All you need to do is merely abide.

I am all you must know;
I am all that you need.
I love you; I made you;
You're precious to Me.
So relax and enjoy all eternity....with
Me!

In His hands,

Beth Preston

Parishioner's Photos...



Clarence & Dixie Welborn



**Scott Dawson, Rick Schroeter, and
Jim Furber**



Looking Ahead to Our Next Liturgical Season... Lent

On Wednesday, February 17, 2010, we will enter into one of the most important seasons of the church year—the “40 days” of Lent. The word “Lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, or spring, the time of year when the days begin to lengthen. Lent itself is always the same period of time, but its starting date is tied to the movable feast of Easter and can be as early as February 4 or as late as March 10.

Lent is one of the most important seasons of the church year because it is a time of penitence, an introspective period during which we take stock of our lives and our relationships to discover and change what we must to prepare for Easter and experience the spiritual renewal that comes when we engage in this type of “making right” activity. So, during Lent we each follow the example of Jesus by sacrificing our own will to the purpose of God.

Starting on Ash Wednesday, the Lenten season includes 40 weekdays and five Sundays before Holy Week and the culminating triumph of the Resurrection at Easter.

Lent has two major focuses:

The first is baptism, which in the early church occurred only at Easter. The Sunday readings provide a short course on the meaning of baptism.

The second Lenten theme, the one which most of us are familiar, is that of fasting and renunciation. This theme recalls Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness, and through them the discipline of self-denial reflecting the sacrifice of our will to the purpose of God.

Tuesday, February 16, is the final day before the Lenten fast. This day is variously recalled in the celebration of Carnival (“farewell to meat”) which concluded on “Fat Tuesday” or Mardi Gras, and in Shrove Tuesday’s pancakes (consuming the eggs, milk and fat not allowed during the fasting of Lent). “Shrove” Tuesday refers to the ancient practice of being “shriven” (confessing and receiving absolution) in order to begin and keep a holy Lent.

The liturgical colors of Lent are purple, for penitence and royalty, or rough unbleached linen, based on the sackcloth of Old Testament mourning and reflecting the somber mood of the season.

How'd You Get to St. Luke's? (Part 2)



Of our members, **Linda Appleton** has the longest drive to reach St. Luke's. Linda's home is in Alvin, south of Houston. But there is an interesting story of divine love and loving human relationships that guides her drives to Cypress Mill.

Linda was born and raised in Houston and was married to Ronnie Appleton. In that marriage, Linda became very close to Ronnie's family, especially Ronnie's father, brother and sister (Connie Bye). Ronnie died of cancer in August 2007. That same day, Ronnie's father also died. Ronnie's brother died a year later. Linda lost her husband, father-in-law and brother-in-law. Her sister-in-law, Connie lost 2 brothers and her father. But neither Linda nor Connie lost their faith. Immediately after Ronnie's funeral, Tommie and Connie offered to pull Linda's travel trailer to their ranch near Marble Falls to protect it from the coming hurricane season. Linda accompanied them.

The next Sunday, Tommy was at his church in Fort Worth and Connie and Linda visited St. Luke's for the first time. Linda immediately felt the presence of the Lord at St. Luke's, in both the church and its people. Linda and Connie soon returned several times to worship at St. Luke's, and as she got to know the parishioners, she received love, acceptance and comfort from us in her time of need.

Linda has an adult daughter, and adult son, a college-aged son and three grandchildren. All live near her home in Alvin. Linda's boys were close in age to Tommy and Connie's son Trevor. Since the three boys enjoyed being together so much, they spent much time together as youngsters on the Bye Ranch. These visits to the ranch allowed Linda and Connie to develop a very close sister-in-law relationship. Following Ronnie's death, Linda's frequent trips to the Bye Ranch have provided her with many blessings, especially the blessing of opportunities for physical labor that helped Linda deal with her grief. The relationship that Linda and Bye's formed so long ago has been a source of great comfort for all following the close series of Appleton deaths.

When at the ranch Linda resides in her travel trailer (heated and with AC) and showers in a guest house next door. She's been of great help to Tommy and Connie with making improvements of all types on the ranch. One remarkable woman!

Linda became a Christian at age 12 through Vacation Bible School. Her husband also found Christ through children's bible school, but as an adult. These experiences generated Linda's interest in our Piedras Negras mission effort with the bible school there that Linda helped with last summer. It was that experience with the dire needs of people in Piedras Negras that calls Linda to help with other Piedras Negras mission efforts.

Linda feels blessed to have found St. Luke's at a crucial time in her life, and many of its parishioners feel the same in reverse.

Continued from Page 1...

It is worth noting that Epiphany was the original occasion of gift giving during the season as commemoration of the Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The feast days of the church can be a reminder of our own need and efforts for spiritual journey. The Epiphany feast specifically directs us to it. Just as the Magi seek out Jesus in their own lives, so would we do in ours. Their journey required devotion and persistence. So might ours. The answers, or manifestations, were evident to the disciples as we can read in the scriptures. However, our journeys are about those manifestations becoming a reality in our lives, just as they were in the disciples. May the Lord be with you on your journey throughout this Epiphany season.

Father Bye +

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church
263 Spur 962
Cypress Mill, Texas 78663**