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Pastors Page ~ Preparing for a Feast

Britt recently cooked an elaborate French dinner for a dozen or so folks. Preparations began well ahead of time with a careful planning of the menu followed by shopping for the precise ingredients. Preparation of the food itself and cooking commenced three or four days before the dinner. Not a single person was disappointed in the dinner. All of that preparatory work paid off. Through this experience I was reminded that great celebrations require a period of preparation.

Easter is one great celebration. Since Easter is so central to the Christian life and experience, it also requires a period of preparation. Without such a period of preparation its power and meaning may be diminished.

The season of Lent serves this purpose. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter. The root meaning of the word Lent is “springtime” and refers to the lengthening of

days during this time of year. Anciently, Lent was a time to prepare adults for Holy Baptism where they would become one with Christ in his death and resurrection. The church has recovered this ancient practice. Those in Bethlehem’s “Journey of Faith” process go deeper during Lent as they prepare for either Baptism or Affirmation of Baptism at the Easter Vigil. Over the years, disciplines such as fasting, prayer and works of love were developed as ways for all of us to journey through Lent. These are not intended to make ourselves feel bad. To the contrary! They are gifts used individually and communally to practice the presence of God.

In this newsletter you will read about a number of opportunities to practice Lent including an opportunity to practice a shared discipline. Guaranteed, God will work the miracle

of resurrection and new life at Easter whether we observe Lent or not, but I commend these practices to us so that we may discover in fresh ways our identity in Christ and take the time to prepare, together, for the festival of the Resurrection – the greatest celebration of all.

Peace,

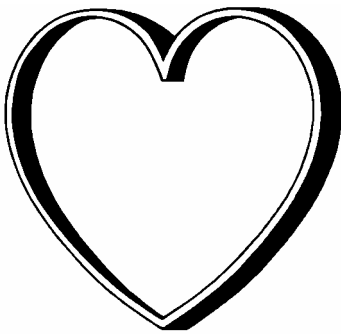
Pastor Bryon +

Please pick up a copy of

Renewed for Life

A book of reflections for the season of Lent, based on the works of Henri J. M. Nouwen, are available in the Narthex for your use.

There is a reflection for each day beginning Ash Wednesday and continuing through Easter Sunday. Please help yourself to a copy or two.



We live with the promise that God will provide our every need, and that includes getting through the stressful experiences in life.

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."
2 Corinthians 12:9

HOW FAR DOES LOVE GO?

February seems to be filled with hearts....red, lacy, sparkly, soft, shiny, hearts. They are the first things that grab our eyes as we walk into a store. What a symbol celebration! What a statement people are making to one another when buying a special valentine! I observed men and women at our local CVS right before the Big February 14th day...the women seemed to go right to the cards, pick one out, pay for it and exit....a part of their busy day. The men, on the other hand, spent many minutes, picking up one card after another before choosing one, and then to the candy boxes where they had no trouble picking the largest one with the biggest satin red ribbon. Made me wonder if the women were just ready to give a restaurant gift certificate to have a night out....or spending special time in the kitchen making a special meal.

Hearts have been know to symbolize love for centuries. Have they really symbolized what God intended as love? Last Sunday we heard in the sermon that we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Jesus puts us to the test to live outside the candy box, and love more than those who we

know already love us. He challenges us to go further than the valentine store. Maybe he even challenges us to buy a jar of chocolate peanuts and give it to the homeless sitting outside the store's door.

Maybe there is even a challenge to love one who has turned a cold shoulder, offered n unloving remark or instigated a hateful experience in your life. In the February issue of the Mayo Clinic Health Letter, a reader asked the question; "A friend recently spent a week in the hospital with what she called broken heart syndrome. What is it?" My first reaction was to skip over the article, but it grabbed my attention, and found out that indeed, there is a condition known in the medical circles as stress cardiomyopathy or apical ballooning syndrome. It is a temporary heart condition that comes in the wake of a highly unexpected stressful emotional situation....such as death or sudden illness of a loved one, shocking news of a partner wanting a divorce, or painful watching of a teen or young person letting go of a will to live. It cause sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, mimicking a heart attack. But unlike an actual heart attack, there are no clogged arteries...mainly a temporary weakening of the left ventricle which pumps the blood through the heart

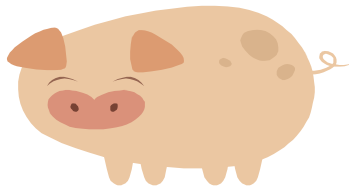
and into the lungs. The cause of this weakening is unclear, but since it occurs more frequently in post menopausal women, a connection with stress hormones seem to be a possible answer. A week in the hospital for rest, along with standard heart failure medication initiation seems to be the routine care. Symptoms usually regress in about four weeks, but if recurrence occurs, beta blockers are recommended to block the effects of some stress hormones.

Isn't it mysterious that emotions can play such a drastic part in the performance of our body organs. What is the cross over between feelings and cell dysfunction? Only those who study biopsychology can even begin to answer. But it seems that through the ages, Christians sought help in the Lord for these answers. We are fortunate to have medical assistance when needed now, but not to replace our self ability to search out comfort in prayer. God provides us with acceptance, understanding and unconditional love to overcome those who have hurt us or the shock of the unexpected. We live with the promise that God will provide our every need, and that includes getting through the stressful experiences in life.
A Happy belated Valentines Day. *Randi, FCN*

12 Things You Don't Know About Mrs. Kathye Hamm

KIDS CORNER

Number 2: One of my hobbies is Belly Dance. I started in the summer of 2005 with a group of other “band moms.” I enjoyed it so much – it’s great exercise and a fun group of ladies – I’ve continued and even have moved from the beginning group to intermediate. (I’m the only one left from the original group.) We practice once a week for an hour, working on technique and learning choreography. Every year in July and December our instructor holds a Student Night where all of the groups perform and many dancers do solos. We’ve done a dance with zils (finger cymbals) and we are currently learning a dance with veils for our next student night.



God's Global Barnyard

Thanks to your generous donations, we have collected \$488.20. That's enough for a fish farm, sheep, goat, pig, duck and 13 chicks! Watch the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to see our progress. Only \$11.80 more and we can buy a cow



SAVE THE DATE

June 13-17th ~ 5:30 to 8:30 PM

For the Entire Family!

Mark Your Calendar



Wednesdays in Lent

Beginning March 9

You are invited to take part in one or all of these activities

- Morning Prayer at 10:00 a.m.
- Lectionary study at 10:30 (a great way to dwell in the Lenten word)
- Holy Communion at Noon
- Lunch at 12:30
- Evening Ecumenical Services at 7:00 p.m. (see the schedule in this edition of the *Herald*)



Stephen Ministry Update

Even A Stephen for a Month Can Be Fruitful

This month's column is for those of you who may think your challenge or problem doesn't "rise to the level" of Stephen ministry ... first thing, let's agree to dispel that assumption. Sure, a lot of the focus of Stephen care tends to be for those "big" life situations, like loss of loved one, spiritual crisis, divorce, or illness. But no issue is too small, if it's on your mind. There is no litmus test, ranking of priority, or other hoop one must pass through for

consideration of a Stephen Minister.

A Stephen Minister might be quite valuable to you for even just a handful of get-togethers -- even four or five weeks of time could be quite helpful in a number of common life situations. For example, you might be considering retirement, moving to another city or neighborhood, or concerned about a co-worker but not sure how to proceed. An empathetic caregiver can help you process thoughts, reflect and share feelings, and provide spiritual support for just about any situation. So no

matter how small you may feel your burden is, just ask the pastor or any Stephen leader for more information about a listening partner.

Consider the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from his treatise, *Life Together*: "The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love of God begins with listening to his word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them."

May one of us be a set of ears and a Christian heart for you?
- **Your Stephen Ministry Team**

In Home Study - The Art of Forgiveness

To my way of thinking, one of the greatest teachings of Christ is the act of forgiveness. We say it in the Lord's prayer, we read it in the Sermon on the Mount, we see it in countless parables and encounters throughout the New Testament. Forgiveness is a gift intended to help us heal ourselves from wrongs done to us by others -- and, I would submit -- wrongs we did to ourselves and can't seem to let go of.

Forgiving others and ourselves is a fundamental part of living -- we're human beings, we sin and are sinned against; we are hurt, and hurt others; we all fall short of the mark. Yet sometimes forgiving is the hardest thing to do. If you

are thinking about this subject and would like to learn more about it, consider this study as part of your Lenten Journey.

Lewis Smedes' book will serve as the guide for our 5-week journey on forgiveness. Subtitled "When you need to forgive and don't know how," this book explores such aspects as:

- Why we forgive (often the person who benefits most is the forgiver);
- What we do when we forgive (perhaps not what we expect);
- Whom we forgive (only those who directly wrong us); and
- How we forgive (we start by owning our pain)

The 5-week study will take place on Tuesday evenings, beginning March 15, from 6:30pm to 8pm. Chuck and Joann Anderson have graciously made their Auburn home available for our gatherings. (Other dates will be: 3/22, 3/29, 4/5, and 4/12).

Copies of the book will be available (for about \$10) from Joe Irvin if you reserve one with him by March 9. Or you may wish to find it on Amazon.com or Half.com. Email Joe to let him know that you will be attending and desire a book: irvinjj@gmail.com. Additionally, weekly study guide notes will be made available.

One of the greatest teachings of Christ is the act of forgiveness.

We will consider these studies and the words we share as confidential and supportive -- I look forward to serving as your shepherd through what should be an enriching time. Please email or call me if you have any questions (916-417-9537).

One

It is coming. That time of year when chocolate sales plummet, fast-food restaurants market their “fish option,” and “Hallelujahs” disappear. Lent is right around the corner and many of us are scrambling to decide what we are going to give up. I cannot help but wonder if this is what the early Christians had in mind when they began practicing this season that we call “Lent?”

Believe it or not, I am really excited for Lent. I love that we all walk together alongside of our

brothers and sisters (well actually this year it is just sisters) in the Journey of Faith, as they inwardly prepare themselves for the affirmation of their baptism. Like many things, I am afraid that Lent has been distorted in our culture as a time to punish ourselves by dwelling on our Sin in order for us to feel bad, or as a simple “work” of self-control in order to please God. Lent, in its purest form, is an opportunity to be introspective of our blind ways of sin and take a radical step in

discipleship of fasting, alms (charity), and prayer. Lenten disciplines should exist to intentionally dive into these forms of worship as a way to prepare our hearts for the Easter celebration.

My hope and prayer for myself and for this congregation is that we take Lent seriously. That we look at our lives and search for ways to create a better story, a story written by God for the benefit of the world, rather than a story written by us for the benefit of us. A story that is in tune

with the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

During Lent– “Look at your lives and search for ways to create a better story, a story written by God for the benefit of the world. “

Bethlehem’s Shared Lenten Journey

Did you see the special calendar included in this newsletter describing an activity for each day in the season of Lent? We invite every member and friend of Bethlehem to journey through Lent together by participating in these daily activities. As you can see, the daily activities revolve around

some of Bethlehem’s ministries of outreach and justice. These culminate in Special offerings each Sunday for these particular ministries: Gathering Inn, ELCA World Hunger, our sister parish in Rwanda, missionary support in Guyana, Auburn Interfaith Food Closet and the Congregations in

Mexico. Post it on your refrigerator or some special place. Journey with your spouse, family or others in the Bethlehem community. Pray that through this shared discipline, God will open our hearts and show us the way.



Ash Wednesday ~ March 9, 2011

Two opportunities for worship

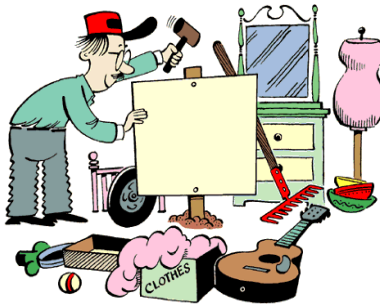
Noon – Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at Bethlehem

7:00 p.m. – Ecumenical Service with Imposition of Ashes at St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church ~ 11600 Atwood Rd. Auburn

Christians gather on this day to begin their journey to Easter. On this day, the people of God receive an ashen cross on their forehead, are invited to participate in the Lenten fast in preparation for Easter’s feast, and contemplate anew the ongoing meaning of living as baptized children of God. While we are reminded of our mortality on this day, we hear the greater promise of God’s forgiveness and taste God’s mercy in the bread of life and the cup of salvation.



May 7 Rummage Sale Update



**We are
collecting
Rummage for
the Sale, we
even pick it up.**

Exciting news - January 2011 construction work started on the Kibungo, Rwanda Lutheran Church. The property owner agreed to release land to the Kibungo parish on the condition that he receive a final payment for property in June 2011. As you can see, the success of the May 7th rummage sale is of the utmost importance. This update for Bethlehem Lutheran Church includes pictures of the construction (posted on the bulletin board in our BLC Fellowship Hall). Construction progress includes clearing the land, digging foundations, and

starting the foundation walls. When completed the church will be about 65 feet long and 33 feet wide and will be able to accommodate about 100 people.

Our sister-congregation in Kibungo, Rwanda recently sent a report which includes their message of: "very warm greetings from Rwanda." The Rwandan congregation would also like to personally thank Bethlehem Lutheran Church for its generous financial support. Happily, their congregation continues to grow in faith with 16 families, for a total of 38 members (23

women and 15 men). Five wonderful babies are set to be baptized on Easter Sunday, praise God!

The Kibungo Parish is very hopeful that the May 7th rummage sale will be a success so that they will have the needed funds to complete the purchase of their church property. May we all find it in our hearts to be of service to our sisters and brothers in Kibungo, Rwanda

Respectfully submitted,

Don Schultze and Tia Desplancke

Women's Ministry News

GOOD NEWS GIRLS

We would like to report that Donna Larson is at home now doing her exercises diligently and getting along well. She has a new "bionic" knee and hopes to be driving soon. At the Good News Girls Bible Study and at the sewing day on February 1st we made a list of the charities that we would gift this year. Each of the following were given \$100: Navajo Mission, Lutheran Bible Translators, Pacific Lutheran Seminary, Auburn Interfaith Food Closet, Lutheran Social Services, Mt. Cross Bible Camp, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Relief for Haiti, and to the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church for the Triennial Convention coming up in July. A gift of \$200 was given to the Gathering Inn Ministry.

QUILTING PLUS



Join us for a day of fellowship and ministry when we put quilts together (Quilting Plus) on the first and third Tuesday of each month. No sewing talent needed- just come and enjoy the time together and tying quilts. Refreshments are offered too. Sometimes we find it hard to go on with our tasks because of the time we spend visiting over coffee and tea.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Good News Girls will again meet for the study on the 4th Thursday of the month, March 24. The Study is from Lutheran Woman Today. If you don't have a copy we can help you. For more information contact Donna Larson or Kathryn Stoltenburg.

Daily Lectionary for March

T Psalm 104 1 Kings 17:1-16 1 Corinthians 4:6-21	Romans 11:1-6 W <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 Psalm 51:1-17 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
W Psalm 104 Isaiah 66:7-13 Luke 12:22-31	Th Psalm 51 Jonah 3:1-10 Romans 1:1-7
Th Psalm 2 Exodus 6:2-9 Hebrews 8:1-7	F Psalm 51 Jonah 4:1-11 Romans 1:8-17
F Psalm 2 Exodus 19:9b-25 Hebrews 11:23-28	Sa Psalm 51 Isaiah 58:1-12 Matthew 18:1-7
Sa Psalm 2 1 Kings 21:20-29 Mark 9:9-13	Sunday <u>March 13</u> Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11
Sunday <u>March 6</u> Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 <i>or</i> 99 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9	M Psalm 32 1 Kings 19:1-8 Hebrews 2:10-18
M Psalm 78:17-20, 52-55 Exodus 33:7-23 Acts 7:30-34	Tu Psalm 32 Genesis 4:1-16
Tu Psalm 78:17-20, 52-55 1 Kings 19:9-18	

Hebrews 4:14—5:10
W Psalm 32 Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28 Matthew 18:10-14
Th Psalm 121 Isaiah 51:1-3 2 Timothy 1:3-7
F Psalm 121 Micah 7:18-20 Romans 3:21-31
Sa Psalm 121 Isaiah 51:4-8 Luke 7:1-10
Sunday <u>March 20</u> Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17
M Psalm 128 Numbers 21:4-9 Hebrews 3:1-6
Tu Psalm 128 Isaiah 65:17-25 Romans 4:6-13
W Psalm 128 Ezekiel 36:22-32 John 7:53—8:11

Th Psalm 95 Exodus 16:1-8 Colossians 1:15-23
F Psalm 95 Exodus 16:9-21 Ephesians 2:11-22
Sa Psalm 95 Exodus 16:27-35 John 4:1-6
Sunday <u>March 27</u> Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42
M Psalm 81 Genesis 24:1-27 2 John 1-13
Tu Psalm 81 Genesis 29:1-14 1 Corinthians 10:1-4
W Psalm 81 Jeremiah 2:4-13 John 7:14-31, 37-39
Th Psalm 23 1 Samuel 15:10-21 Ephesians 4:25-32

March Birthday's

Larry Brieschke	Susanna Hadley
Kelly Lardner	Audrey Mueller
Patrick Darling	Janet Guerreiro
Joan Van Nest	Cindy Bowman
Charlotte Csontos	Al Clark
Gary Wakefield	Shirley Eggebraaten
Ginny Leal	Ira & Lorraine Rowe
Keith Magee	Wayne Larson
Joshua Johnson	Phillip Leichliter
Rose Mornin	Marianne Williams
Jose Untalan	Lola Altus
Alexa Tjornhom	Michael Desplanceke
Elaine Reese	Kris Ramos
Terrell Wren	Steve Vandenhoff

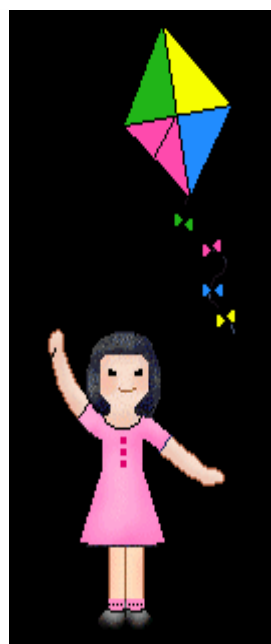
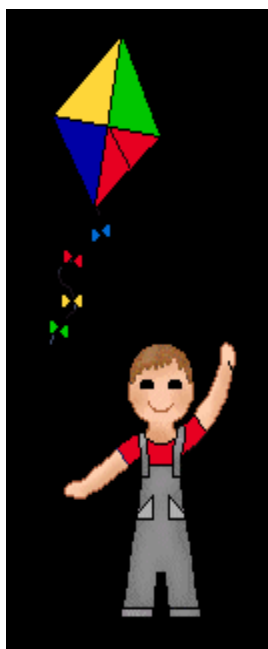
From Our Worship Coordinator

Lent is just around the corner. Ash Wednesday, March 9, will begin the season of Lent once again. We have many worship opportunities during Lent, to help us prepare our hearts and minds for Easter. Please check the calendar and plan to attend these extra services.

Thank you to all of those who served at worship during February. The March schedule is included in this Herald.

Peace, Denise Nelson *Worship Coordinator.*





Kite Day

BLC Kite Day & Picnic at Gold Country Fairgrounds

Sunday, March 27th

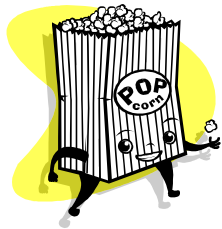
12 noon to 3:00 PM

6th Annual Kite Day and Picnic

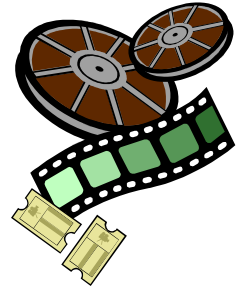
Bring your picnic lunch, and your smiles.

*For more information or to volunteer contact Tia Desplancke at 530-268-1068 or
contact the church office 885-4515*

*Needed: hot dog cooks, jumpy house attendants, greeters, set-up, clean-up,
photographers, game and kite helpers*



MOVIE NIGHT



Saturday, March 12

7:00 pm

The Hamm's

R.S.V.P. to Kathye by 3/9

Bring your favorite movie food and/or drink –
popcorn provided!

Shrove Tuesday Dinner

A Shrove Dinner will be held on March 8 at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall. We will be serving pancakes and sausage! All donations will go toward our Mexico Mission trip.



SHROVE TUESDAY

Endowment Grants for 2011

**Endowment
Fund offering
Grant Money!
Apply NOW!**

For the first time the endowment program is offering grant money for the enhancement of Bethlehem Lutheran ministries. A portion of or all of the total of \$4,275.00 is available to groups or individu-

als who qualify through the request process. Funds may be requested for the following general purposes: outreach, missions, or capital improvements. Fund request forms which explain the qualifica-

tions may be secured at the church hoffice and submitted not later than March 31, 2011. Those grants which are approved will be awarded on or about April 15, 2011.

The Fruit of the Spirit: A Woman's Day of Exploration

Saturday April 2, 2011—8:30am to 12:30pm —\$5
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Auburn

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22-23)

We will spend our time together examining the nine different qualities of the fruit of the spirit and looking at where we can exhibit these wonderful gifts in our daily walk. The day will allow for group discussion, alone time, contemplative activities and communing with other women of God. Come see what God reveals to you!

Please RSVP by March 27 to hold your space. The retreat will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church this year and feature a continental breakfast. Contact Patricia Slaven-Irvin—devoptalent@gmail.com



Auburn Ecumenical Lenten Series 7:00 PM every Wednesday

FASTING PRAYER

WORKS OF LOVE

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 9 | St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 11600 Atwood Rd.
You are invited to a soup bread supper at 6:00 PM |
| March 16 | First United Church of Christ, 710 Auburn Ravine Rd. |
| March 23 | Pioneer United Methodist Church, 1338 Lincoln Way |
| March 30 | Auburn Presbyterian Church, 13025 Bell Air Dr. |
| April 6 | Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1279 High Street |
| April 13 | Sisters of Mercy, 535 Sacramento Street. |

Offerings will be given to Catholic Social Services, The Salvation Army, The Gathering Inn, Auburn Interfaith Food Closet

Journey of Faith

On the 1st Sunday in Lent, March 13th, the six participants in this year's Journey of Faith, Jennifer Bayer-Darling, Susie Beeck, Erin Grover, Laura Hesse, Heather Iezzi, and Phyllis Schmierer will be participating in the Call to Continuing Conversion.

Please take time to greet each of them after the service, and ask them about their experience in Journey of Faith.

Coming Soon

Watch for pictures of them, along with pictures of the Confirmands, on a

bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. There will also be a basket with the names of each Journey of Faith Inquirer and each Confirmand. Please draw a name from the basket and pray for that person throughout the Lenten Season.



Book of Faith Study

Have you heard of the "Book of Faith" initiative in the ELCA? It includes a number of Adult studies probing the heights and

depths of the Bible, the church's Book of Faith. Art Otto will facilitate a "Book of Faith" Study on Wednesday evenings dur-

ing Lent as part of "The Well." The Class commences after dinner at 5:30. All are welcome.

Art News



Be sure to view our Lenten exhibit, "Stations of the Cross," starting March 8th and running until Easter. Also, welcome to our new members of the Ad Hoc Art Committee; Jan Reid, Richard Reid...Thanks

for joining us! Other members are: Audrey Mueller, Brian Johnson and Kathy Ryan.

Evening Service of Meditation, Peace & Prayer

The Evening Service of Meditation, Peace and Prayer continues on the last Sunday of each month at 5:30 PM. The next service is March 27th. This contemplative service features Taize' music.



Many, many thanks to all of you who prayed for me and sent cards when I had my knee surgery. It was very much appreciated and meant a great deal to both Tom and I. My new knee is just fine and I'm doing well. Thanks again and God Bless, Donna Larson.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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E-mail: bethlutheran@yahoo.com

Sharing Christ's Love

We Are on the Web

www.bethlehemplutheranauburn.org

Worship Services

Saturday Evening 5:00 PM

Sunday Morning 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM

Evening Service of Meditation, Peace
and Prayer – Last Sunday of the month
at 5:30 PM



KITE DAY

Please join us at

Gold Country Fairgrounds

Sunday, March 27, 2011

noon

6th Annual Kite Day and
Picnic.

ALL ARE WELCOME!