

A publication of



DIVINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO

Divinity Digest



A PEOPLE AND PLACE OF HOPE,
HEALING AND WELCOME

January, 2010



Tangled Blue In Concert
Saturday, January 23, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Divinity Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall – Coffee House
Youth and Family Event
(sponsored by Arts in Action)

Tangled Blue will play
for 5:30 p.m. worship on Saturday, January 23
and 9 and 11:00 a.m. worship on
January 24, 2010.



Divinity Sisters and
Brothers in Christ,

I'll be teaching a
January interim "Book of
Faith" Bible study. At 6
p.m. on Mondays and
9:30 a.m. on
Wednesdays, beginning
January 4 and 6 through

February 8 and 10, we will gather to study four
key characters from our Old Testament –
Rachel, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua. The
cost of the study book is \$6 and will be passed
out at the first class.

On Saturday and Sunday, January 16
and 17, we will be giving thanks to God for
opportunities to share our God-given time and
talents to build up our Divinity ministry
together. We will recognize those who
completed our spiritual gifts class this fall and
fill out our spiritual gifts sheets for our 2010
Divinity Ministry. The following is an excerpt
from our spiritual gifts class that answers the
question, "Who Are These Saints?"

... *In Christ, Pastor Doug*

Who Are These Saints?

Christ invites everyone to join him in
ministry.

*"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from
me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and
you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is
easy, and my burden light" (Matthew 11:29-
30).*

Yokes don't sound like fun no matter
how light Jesus says they are, so people are
typically not eager to accept this invitation.
They don't understand that Jesus offers them
freedom from strangling themselves. Before
the invention of the yoke, animals were
harnessed to labor with a wide leather band
that went around their chest. The harder the
animal pulled, the more the leather band cut
off the animal's oxygen supply. The yoke
transferred the load to the animal's shoulder
muscles, freeing it to work at full efficiency-
without choking itself

We work in the Lord's fields. Jesus offers
us a way to improve our efficiency,
effectiveness, and well-being. Jesus offers

freedom, not slavery.

One way to avoid taking the yoke of Christ
is to misunderstand the word *saints*. Many
people believe that saints are extraordinarily
holy people. They think the phrase "to equip
the saints for the work of ministry" is about
someone else and for someone else. They
think it's about the handful of people in the
world like Mother Teresa.

Such a view chops the church at the knees.
The fact is, we have met the saints and they
are us.

The word translated as "saints" in
Ephesians 4:12 is the Greek word *hagios*,
meaning "most holy ones." This is the
occasion for many to shrug off their sainthood:
"See! That's exactly why I know this word
couldn't possibly apply to me," says the
average Christian. "Despite my every effort I
am definitely not living a holy life."

Oh yes you are. You have been "saint-
ified." You have been made a saint. You have
been made holy – you are sanctified. All who
believe in Christ and trust in his atoning death
and the victory of his resurrection have been
made holy by God. You have been sanctified.

You are not a saint because of what you did.
You are a saint because of what God did. God
made you holy. God reconciled you by
sacrificing God's Son, Jesus Christ -- an act so
amazing we still talk about it as if it happened
yesterday, though it happened two thousand
years ago.

Accept the invitation to take Jesus' yoke
gladly. You will breathe easier because of it.
Accept the designation of saint with joy. God
has made you good enough.

John Stott, Anglican priest and author,
writes about this.

*So Christ's immediate purpose in the giving of
pastors and teachers to his church is through their
ministry of the word to equip all his people for their
varied ministries. And the ultimate purpose of this is
to build up his body, the church. For clearly the way
the whole body grows is for all its members to use
their God-given gifts. These gifts are so beneficial
both to those who exercise their ministry faithfully
and to those who receive it that the church*

becomes steadily more healthy and mature. If the sixteenth century recovered 'the priesthood of all believers' (every Christian enjoying through Christ a direct access to God), perhaps the twentieth century will recover 'the ministry of all believers' (every Christian receiving .from Christ a privileged ministry to men).

All spiritual gifts, then, are service-gifts.

This is their purpose. They are not given for selfish but for unselfish use, namely for the service of other people.

The Holy Spirit works through pastors and other equippers to awaken faith and love for God that motivate Christians to respond by cultivating and using their gifts. Pastors preach and teach God's word, which inspires and motivates individuals to use God's gifts. All the people of God are ministers, and as people are equipped for ministry, the entire body of Christ, including pastors, is built up. The work that Stott hoped would be accomplished in the twentieth century is still going on, but the Holy Spirit's efforts are multiple and efficacious.



**Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
Northeastern Ohio
Synod – ELCA**

Ever since the churchwide assembly, people have been asking me "How are you doing, Bishop?" They ask it with the solicitude usually reserved for women in their last trimester or prisoners awaiting execution. "Well," I tell them, "I have been compared to Satan and consigned to Hell. I have been charged with heresy, apostasy and spitting on Jesus. I have been accused of manipulating synod assemblies and fixing elections to further the 'Gay Agenda'. I have had the wrath and judgment of God called down upon me... and that's on a good day." I freely confess that I misjudged the depth of feeling around this issue. I am saddened that the actions of the churchwide assembly have engendered such anger that it is sometimes difficult for me,

in my own brokenness, to see the lovely face of Christ in my brother or sister.

But there are other reactions and encounters. There have been rich and meaningful conversations with church councils and individuals who do not agree with nor understand the actions of the churchwide assembly, but who still want to engage with those who have come to a different understanding. There are other congregations for whom mission and ministry continue, undistracted. There are congregations rejoicing in the churchwide assembly decisions. For all these congregations I give thanks. We need each of you.

Right now the most immediate and troubling development is the decision of individuals and congregations to redirect or withhold mission support. I know that some of you face this in your congregations. Some people are angry. Others feel betrayed. Some do not want to support the ELCA. Unfortunately in the congregation this means that there is less money to support Sunday School, evangelism, the gas bill, the secretary, custodian, choir director or youth worker. I don't think people mean to hurt the people and programs of their own congregation, but that's what happens. Congregations have also made the decision to redirect or withhold mission support to the synod. This might make more sense to some because "the synod" (like "the government") represents the ELCA or the churchwide assembly that perpetrated the current unpleasantness upon unsuspecting congregations. Money speaks – either to register profound disagreement or to use as leverage to force a change. This reaction, however, makes two assumptions: First, that the conviction based on scripture, that homosexual sexual activity is sinful, is a dissenting view – it is not, it is one of the understandings of our church; and second, that withholding mission support will force an immediate change of the churchwide assembly actions – it will not, that can only happen at a future assembly.

Withholding or redirecting mission support has had an impact on the mission and ministry of the synod. Your staff members are dedicated, faithful and resourceful and have renewed their resolve to serve Jesus and his

church on the territory of the Northeastern Ohio Synod. Budget realities forced by withholding mission support have necessitated deep cuts. Rather than any one member losing his or her job, the entire staff will reduce hours and compensation. The synod council, deans and committee chairs will be wrestling with this on December 3. They will help your staff decide which ministries have greater priority and which can receive less attention. As you can imagine this causes great discomfort for your staff who want to do all of their work and not have to triage their ministry.

In last month's unified mailing Pastor Ron Zoesch introduced you to some of our new mission starts and mission developers. They are a remarkable, entrepreneurial, faithful group. One of them, Miguel Acosta, is still learning to speak American English. We are not too sure about his tutors because some of the phrases he has picked up are not altogether suitable for polite company. But two things that he says all the time could become mottos for our synod: "Thanks God" and "OK – Let's Go!" Miguel came to our synod with nothing except absolute faith in and reliance upon God, so, of course, he had everything. That will be my model as I seek to lead in these times. The current economic set back will not force me to contract from ministry. We all need to be challenged. We need to talk to our people about tithing – that is biblical. I challenge all of us to become a tithing synod. To those of you who contribute mission support, thank you. To those of you who continue to contribute mission support even though you disagree with the actions of the churchwide assembly, I am humbled by your faithfulness. To all of us – it's time to crank it up. Thanks God! OK – Let's Go!

Christ Child we renew our focus on reaching out to all peoples as a Christian family. Many possibilities for outreach are before us. There are many exciting avenues to spread the gospel and what Divinity Lutheran Church has to offer.

Arts in Action will be hosting a "coffee house" concert with Tangled Blue on the weekend of January 23 and 24. There will be an admission charge of \$5.00 at the door only, no advanced tickets for this event. Anyone bringing a canned good for the food pantry will receive a coupon/ticket for one regular coffee. There will be various types of coffees on the menu and they will be appropriately priced.

In February T.S. Good and Rodgers Organs will present an organ concert followed by a "master's" class. They are bringing in Rodney Barbour as guest artist. Mr. Barbour is presently an organist in Cincinnati and performs for Rodgers organs and conducts classes on the use of the midi on their organs.

For Easter, the Arts in Action Committee will be holding its annual Easter Candy Sale. Look for further information and order blanks in the February Digest.

Tangled Blue

Last year Arts in Action brought to our sanctuary the husband/wife team of **Joel** and **Aimee Pakan** better known as Tangled Blue. Their uplifting musical message of God's love for us was a resounding success. Joel and Aimee reside in Robbinsdale, MN. They have a Cleveland connection though; Aimee's parents reside in Avon, OH. They enjoy coming to the Cleveland area for concerts because it gives them the opportunity to visit with family and friends.

One of our committee members had heard them at Parma Lutheran a couple of years ago and had encouraged us to have them come to Divinity last year. As a result of that concert we have been asked to have them return to lead us in worship and praise and in concert. We look forward to having them here and are inviting all of Divinity's members to bring a family and/or friend to any of the appearances that weekend. Tangled Blue will be presenting their music in all three services and a concert on Saturday evening at 7:00



Matthew: 5:19 "And he said unto them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

Another year has passed and the future is before us. We are in the midst of Christmastide and approaching Epiphany on January 6. With the birth of the

p.m. Tickets for the concert are \$5.00 and Arts in Action are encouraging everyone to bring a canned good for the food pantry. With the recent holiday season there was a great drain on our food pantry and this is a great way to restock and replenish it.



Something new is coming to Divinity in January. The Boards of Parish Life and Social Ministry are together sponsoring a supper for members, friends, and the

community. A Care Share Supper is being planned for Sunday, January 17, 2010 from 4 – 6 p.m. We encourage you to plan on attending this supper. Invite your friends, especially those who often are alone at meal time or those experiencing difficulties during these hard times in our nation. If you live near the church, please help us by inviting your neighbors to attend this fellowship gathering. We will also have notices at both the Parma and Parma Heights Hunger Centers inviting their clients to join us at this supper. We have been blessed as a congregation and this supper is a way to say thank you to the Lord.

There is no cost for anyone attending this supper. We will have plenty of food but can only be successful if you will help us by planning on attending, telling others about the event, and bringing your friends with you.

... *Mary O'Rourke*

For the Boards of Parish Life and Social Ministry



Youth in the Digest!

December 18 – Senior High Youth and their families were invited to join us at Redeemer to pack food for the holiday season. It was a time for them to give back for all they received this Christmas. Many thanks to those who took the time to help those in

need.

December 20 – Senior High Youth went to “Whirlyball” over in Bedford Heights. They spent the afternoon in fellowship with their friends over at Parma Lutheran Church. A great time was had by all.

They also took part in their third Service Hour Sunday on December 20. They spent time planning their own youth events, working on their Youth Room’s “Wall of Passages,” they were greeters, ushers, and more.

Mark Your Calendars:

January 3 – No 10 a.m. Class.

January 10 – 10 a.m. class resumes, Youth return to the church from LYO Winter Gathering at 1 p.m.

January 17, 24, and 31 – Super Bowl Sub Sale – Orders being taken.

February 7 – Super Bowl Subs – Pick up and Souper Bowl of Caring, 9 – 12p

Remember: You can also receive updates pertaining to the Senior High Youth’s activities online. Go to www.divinitylutheran.com and select the “youth” drop down box.

Coming Soon to Divinity

Back by popular demand – Super Bowl Sub Sale. Watch the bulletin for order dates and pricing.

Perfect Couples Date Night – Spend some time with your family and friends at the Second Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction scheduled for Valentine’s Day weekend on Saturday, February 13. Looking for help to get donations for the Silent Auction.

“Tangled Blue Coffee House” – We would like to extend a special church-wide invitation to all youth and their families to this event featuring “Tangled Blue” to be held on Saturday, January 23. Contact Laura Ramsey at 440-845-2060 or lm_ramsey@sbcglobal.net if you are a youth who wishes to help out with this event. School volunteer hours are available.



7th and 8th Grade Confirmation

“Those things that weigh us down separate us from Jesus. God is the working creator.”

... **Nicole LaPerna**

“Three things to do until the Son of Man comes: watch, pray, and work.”

... **Sean Klemme**

“I will remember the little concert the choir put on. It was really amazing and beautiful. I also think my grandma did a really good job.”

... **Mark Ackerman, Jr.**

Age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) is a degenerative condition of the **macula** (the central **retina**). It is the most

common cause of vision loss in the United States in those 50 or older, and its prevalence increases with age. AMD is caused by hardening of the arteries that nourish the retina. Macular degeneration varies widely in severity. In the worst cases, it causes a complete loss of central vision, making reading or driving impossible. For others, it may only cause slight distortion. Fortunately, macular degeneration does not cause total blindness since it does not affect the peripheral vision.

What is the difference between wet and dry macular degeneration?

AMD is classified as either wet (**neovascular**) or dry (non-neovascular). About 10% of patients who suffer from macular degeneration have wet AMD. This type occurs when new vessels form to improve the blood supply to oxygen-deprived retinal tissue. However, the new vessels are very delicate and break easily, causing bleeding and damage to surrounding tissue.

What causes macular degeneration?

Macular degeneration may be caused by

variety of factors. Genetics, age, nutrition, smoking, and sunlight exposure may all play a role.

Signs and Symptoms

- Loss of central vision. This may be gradual for those with the dry type. Patients with the wet type may experience a sudden decrease of the central vision.
- Difficulty reading or performing tasks that require the ability to see detail
- Distorted vision (Straight lines such as a doorway or the edge of a window may appear wavy or bent.)

Detection and Diagnosis

Eye physicians usually diagnose AMD

Treatment

There is no proven medical therapy for dry macular degeneration. In selected cases of wet macular degeneration, laser photocoagulation is effective for sealing leaking or bleeding vessels. Recently, **photodynamic therapy** has proven to be effective in stopping abnormal blood vessel growth in some patients with wet AMD. This new type of laser treatment is far less damaging than laser photocoagulation and is the treatment of choice in many cases.

Early diagnosis is critical for successful treatment of wet macular degeneration. Patients can help the doctor detect early changes by monitoring vision at home with an **Amsler grid**.

Nutrition and macular degeneration

Several recent studies have indicated a strong link between nutrition and the development of macular degeneration. It has been scientifically demonstrated that people with diets high in fruits and vegetables (especially leafy green vegetables) have a lower incidence of macular degeneration. More studies are needed to determine if nutritional supplements can prevent progression in patients with existing disease.

... **Submitted by Marti Stephan**
Parish Health Ministry





Pray-er Thoughts

Happy New Year!
It's a greeting that all of us give and receive. Perhaps it signifies that we are grateful the last year is now behind us . . . or is it a time to think about a new beginning?

Some of us have experienced significant changes in our lives in the past year and would welcome an opportunity for a new beginning. What would a new beginning mean for you? Perhaps it would be a healing of some kind . . . like renewed health for some problem you have been experiencing. Or maybe, it would be the opportunity to heal a relationship with someone. Maybe, due to the economy your finances could really use a healing. Maybe you would welcome a chance for a career change, or even just a chance to get a job, any job.

So is it still "Happy New Year"?

There are some in our Divinity Family who are grieving, and things don't seem to get any easier . . . some days are just too tough. What do we think about, or what do they think about when the words "Happy New Year" are spoken?

But, then again, maybe, just maybe the past year was really a terrific one. It could not have been any better and you really pray things stay the same this year.

So perhaps just the next time we say the words "Happy New Year", we can listen to what we are really trying to express. Do you hear it? Is it the tone in our voices that really says what we are trying to convey?

Two four letter words come to my mind when I think about it. The words are HOPE and LOVE.

Here at Divinity, we are family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. It doesn't make any difference if it is a casual acquaintance or a really good friend, when we extend the greeting "Happy New Year" we are offering a

blessing to someone . . . a blessing of hope and God's love. We really want our friends and family and all the people we care about to be happy and healthy, and extending this greeting gives us an opportunity to say so.

Please allow me to take a part of this article to say:

If your health is in need of a healing, may God grant it to you,

If you are having a problem with a difficult relationship, May God surround you with His healing.

If you are struggling with finances, May God lead you to a resolution of your problem.

If you find coping with a loss very difficult, especially during the holidays, May God's Loving Presence be with you and hold you close.

If your life is just what you would like it to be . . . for next year too, May God answer your prayers.

Whatever your circumstance may be, may your New Year be blessed. It is my prayer that you can hear the hope and love in my words as I say to you and yours

HAPPY NEW YEAR!





"Thank you to our Divinity family for all the cards and expressions of sympathy on the passing of our Mom, Rose Huetter. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and prayers. Thank you also to Pastor Doug for a beautiful memorial service and Sunday service honoring Rose's long life. Bless you all."

... **The Huetter Family**

"Sorry I'm late with a thank you. Your very generous donation was so wonderful. We are helping 240 families in Parma Heights every month. All donations are spent at the Cleveland Food Bank. Please let everyone know how much we appreciate your donation."

... **Parma Heights Food Pantry**

"Thanks for allowing us to have the Memorial Tribute at Divinity Lutheran. Everything was perfect. Special thanks to Steve and Scott who helped me out quite a bit."

... **Amy Quinlen, Seasons of Life Hospice**

"On behalf of two low-income families, I would thank you for providing large boxes of food for Thanksgiving. There was a great variety of foods that will keep the families fed for quite some time. Your kindness and consideration are very much appreciated."

... **Elizabeth Jackson**

"My Dear Divinity Family,

Thank you seems such an inadequate way to respond to all of the love and support you have given to David and me over the years and the last several months in particular. Your prayers, cards, phone calls and hugs have been a real source of support and comfort for me and the family.

David had a strong faith, a strong will to live, and believed that God gave him what he needed to go on. We were blessed with more years together than might have been. I will rely on your continuing friendships in the days and weeks ahead. With deepest affection,"

... **Janet Schoch**

"On Sunday, December 6, 2009 at 3 p.m. we held our 26th annual Advent/Christmas service in the German language.

The service was well attended: 115 people were there and enjoyed the beautiful music of the Bavaria Singers and the solo by **Cheryl Bindel**. Our own **Nicole Engelhart** played a beautiful medley of German Christmas tunes on the flute with piano accompaniment by **Steve Czapor**. Pastor **John Hoyer** of Immanuel Lutheran Church presided at the service. Pastor Doug assisted with communion. Steve Czapor played the organ for the service.

We had a special collection for the World Hunger Fund, and \$333.00 was collected. Everyone enjoyed the cookies and coffee and the socializing after the service.

A special 'thank you' to everyone who made the service a success, particularly to Steve Czapor, **Larry Wise, Erik Schumacher, Gertrude Litz, Ed Pabst** and the ushers, the ladies who decorated the church, the communion preparers, and many others, who worked behind the scenes. I hope all of you had a very blessed Christmas season."

... **Erika Wagner**

Procrastinating

... **Don Kamms, October 2009**

I came home from work one day and sat out on my deck, viewing needed yard work, and said oh, what the heck. Went inside and got a beer, came back out and sat. Wondering where time went, and where is my ambition at. I used to come home from work, go out and trim the shrubs, then mow the lawn and spray for bugs and grubs. Now, I'm content to sit and watch the backyard trees, as their leaves flip plop and flutter on a summer breeze. I close my eyes and lay back – the soft breeze across my face, thanking God for all my blessings, given by his grace.



JANUARY, 2010

Sunday, January 3, 2010 – Second Sunday of Christmas

	9:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.
Head Usher	Don Hartwick	Ed Pabst
Assisting Minister	Darryl Tinay	Kip Kanya
Lector	Walter Filipow	
Acolyte/Crucifer	Nicole LaPerna	Tiffany Lisy
Lay Assistants	Linda Engelhart	LeRoy Olson
	Donald Hesterman	Dorothy Olson
Wine Steward	Ed Kahl	Karen Hopp
Welcome Center	Don Hesterman	Judy Votava
Nursery Attendant	Pam Lively	Barb Bemer
Grace Prayer Team: Loretta Cross, Marilyn Sesock		
Communion Bread: Beverly Selong		

Sunday, January 10, 2009 – Baptism of Our Lord

Head Usher	Dave Boxler	Doug Smith
Assisting Minister	Marilyn Sesock	John Forbes
Lector	Fay Maldari	
Acolyte/Crucifer	Jeremy Landrau	Brian Berry
Children's Sermon	David Worsencroft	David Worsencroft
Welcome Center	Linda Engelhart	Dianne Mims
Nursery Attendant	Laura White	Adam Havel
Grace Prayer Team: Marty Hof, Mary Paul		

Sunday, January 17, 2009 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Head Usher	Dennis Miller	Dan Bemer
Assisting Minister	Joyce Tallman	Jill Heise
Lector	Paul Klemme	
Acolyte/Crucifer	Joey Massaroni	Steven Newbould
Lay Assistants	Richard Quint	Mary Goellner
	Beverly Selong	Sandy Cramer
Wine Steward	John Sesock	Judy Junker
Welcome Center	Ethel Horvath	Dorothy Olson
Nursery Attendant	Kim Perez	Marie Marvin
Grace Prayer Team: Judy Junker, Fay Maldari		
Communion Bread: Carol Miller		

Sunday, January 24, 2009 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

Head Usher	Don Hartwick	Ed Pabst
Assisting Minister	Jim Deily	Ken Spanagel
Lector	Leslie Crowe	
Acolyte/Crucifer	Chris Panico	Alex Moe
Children's Sermon	Adam Havel	Adam Havel
Welcome Center	Jan Jasko	Sandra Cramer
Nursery Attendant	Elaine Quint	Laura Smith
Grace Prayer Team: Loretta Cross, Marilyn Sesock		

Sunday, January 31, 2009 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Head Usher	Dave Boxler	Doug Smith
Assisting Minister	Darryl Tinay	Kip Kanya
Lector	Beverly Selong	
Acolyte/Crucifer	Drew Boxler	Mackenzie Grey
Lay Assistants	Dennis Grand	Ed Kahl
	Pat Grand	Joyce Tallman
Wine Steward	Marty Hof	Mary Goellner
Welcome Center	Suzanne LaPerna	Doris Tuhacek
Nursery Attendant	Carolyn Aquilia	Jennifer Klemme
Grace Prayer Team: Leslie Crowe, Jerry Crowe		
Communion Bread: Dorita Blystone		