



Village Voices



JANUARY

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 2005

Straight from the Hart

By Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

The gifts are opened. The decorations need to come down. And for many Americans, January begins a time of depression that effects both the person depressed and the family, friends and co-workers that are a part of the depressed person's life.

God understands that we can feel depressed. In Psalm 34:1-3 (TLB) the Psalmist writes: "I will praise the Lord no matter what happens, I will constantly speak of His glories and grace. I will boast of all His kindness to me. Let all who are discouraged take heart. Let us praise the Lord together, and exalt His name."

What is Depression? Depression is a serious medical illness; it's not something that you have made up in your head. It's more than just feeling "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. It's feeling "down" and "low" and "hopeless" for weeks at a time. Some signs and symptoms of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed.

Christians are sometimes at a disadvantage for depression because they feel that a "good Christian" would not feel this way. Yet the reality is that depression is a medical condition that Christians as well as non Christians can develop. It's not a matter of "cheering up" any more than getting well from a cold is just affirming that one will "get better."

With this said however, our Christian faith does indeed have something to say for those depressed. First of all God created us and loves us. We are his baptized children. He wants us to escape the stifling trap of depression. You are his child and he wants you to feel content and well.

Second, God uses the intelligence and skill of his people to help us. Just as we go to a Pastor for spiritual advice or a health care provider for medical treatment, we can rely on mental health professionals to minister to body and mind. The VLC has an on-site Counseling Center with licensed, trained and caring Christian counselors that can help the depressed person shake the shroud of gloom and misery. (Call the LCC at (516) 741-0994 to set up an appointment at our Bronxville site or check out information on-line at <http://www.lcc132.org/>.)

Primary care doctors and psychiatrists can prescribe medication that can regulate brain chemicals and provide relief.

Information can provide comfort. One may access the National Institute of Mental Health's website that provides clinical information (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/depressionmenu.cfm>).

On the cross, Jesus felt abandoned and alone. He said, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*" Through his death and resurrection and baptized into his community the church, we can never truly be alone. When we feel alone and depressed, let us remember how valuable we are to God, and seek the help we need to serve God as we were created to serve. A thought about the January blues that is straight from the Hart.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Off the Page and Into the Heart, Part II*
- *Focus on Worship*
- *We Are a Church Family*
- *Food for Thought*
- *The Mothers Touch: Vietnam*

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VLC Bible Study / Prayer Opportunities



Daytime Bible Study

Join VLC Adjunct Pastor Allen Kebschull for an informative look at the lessons for the upcoming Sunday. The study meets on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. in the Friendship Room.

Women's Bible Study

Saturday, January 8 at 8:30 a.m.

Esther: Listen Up! (Influence grows by consulting the right sources)

Come and discuss this fascinating woman of God. Please read Esther 3 & 4 and the fifth chapter of Swindoll's book on Esther. Bring coffee, juice and fruit to share – let's leave the sweets home this month!

Couples' Bible Study

It's time to get back on the boat!

A study of John Ortberg's bestseller, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat* was begun last year but never finished. Are you looking for some adult time? Do you long for grownup conversation? Here's your chance!

This video curriculum invites you to consider the incredible potential that awaits you outside your comfort zone. Jesus is waiting to meet you in ways that will change you forever – deepening your character and your trust in God. So let's learn some water-walking skills! Join us at church on Saturday night, January 22 at 7:30 p.m. Please bring a dessert to share; coffee will be provided. Looking for details? Call Kathi Jahnke at 337-8303.

Some Food for Thought

by Deborah Cook, Minister of Prayer and Christian Education



Did you know that the Bible is filled with stories of how God used *ordinary* people to do *extraordinary* things? One example is Moses whose plea, "*Here am I Lord ... send somebody else!*" (Ex. 3:4; 4:13) serves as the title of a book by Jill Briscoe about how God used Moses and his reluctance to bring the Israelites to the Promised Land.

The sixth chapter, *Manna in the Morning*, offers some analogies to Bible study worth considering.

God sent manna to his people every morning for 40 years. This bread from heaven came with instructions – take only what you can eat each day; on the sixth day take twice as much because there would be no manna on the Sabbath. When the Israelites took too much, it spoiled; when they looked for food on the Sabbath, they found none. God supplied what was needed, but he left it up to the Israelites to gather and use it wisely.

Bread is mentioned throughout the Bible – it provided sustenance and was involved in feasts, temptation, miracles, prayer, betrayal and the Last Supper. Most importantly, Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:30-35) and we need look no further than the Bible for nourishment. (Search *bread* on www.biblegateway.com. There are 254 references.)

At the VLC, God provides wonderful opportunities for each of us to be fed through weekly study (Wednesday mornings, Youth meetings, Confirmation class, Sunday School, sermons), monthly study (for women and couples) and on select Sundays (*Off the Page and Into the Heart* Spiritual Growth Blocks). But this is only part of the plan. Just as he instructed the Israelites, God expects each of us to collect our own spiritual food (manna) and not to merely rely on others to feed us.

Here are some "manna-collecting" tips offered by Ms. Briscoe for your personal study of God's word.

1. Begin by reading Exodus 16; pay close attention to God's instructions for gathering manna because they can be applied to our personal Bible study.
2. Don't merely read the Bible, but meditate on it too. Ask yourself questions like: Who wrote this? Who are the characters? Where is this taking place? What are they doing? How did the crowd react? What does the passage say? What did it mean to people at that time? What can I learn from it today? What does it mean to my family, society, country or world? *The Word needs to be chewed on, absorbed, swallowed, digested and used.*
3. The Israelites gathered manna *early* in the morning. Try to get up early to collect your manna – give God a chance to prepare you to face the day.
4. On the Sabbath, the Israelites were told to rest and enjoy the fruits of yesterday's labors. When we collect manna daily, we are able to rest from personal study on Sundays and rely on worship (listening to our shepherds) and Sunday morning Christian education classes (sharing the manna we have collected and meditated on) for sustenance.

VLC Bible Study / Prayer Opportunities Con't

Off the Page and Into the Heart: Spiritual Growth Blocks

Join us as we embark on another journey into the Bible! Block #2 will take place on Sundays, January 23, January 30 and February 6 from 9-10:15 a.m. During these weeks, participants are encouraged to attend worship either Saturday night or Sundays at 8 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. On these Sundays, children will attend Sunday School from 9-10:15 a.m.

The **Teen** study is *The Wounded Spirit* by Frank Peretti – a video curriculum on something everyone has encountered – bullying. Perhaps you've been the victim, or maybe a witness, or even the bully.

Adults have two options:

The Rev. Scott Ashmon, VLC adjunct and professor of religion at Concordia College, will teach "God Acts in Mysterious Ways: Typology in the Bible." This study will try to unravel some of God's mysterious ways of dealing with humanity by looking at some marvelous typological connections between the Old and New Testaments.

The other session will be based on the video curriculum for *The Prayer of Jabez* and will be led by Deborah Cook. We'll delve into 1 Chronicles 4:10 and discover how to ask God for the blessings he longs to give us; why we can't help receiving God's blessing without becoming one ourselves; and how God wants to empower us. Here's an opportunity to learn from Bruce Wilkinson, author of the bestselling *The Prayer of Jabez*.

Prayer Opportunities



Join us for 75 minutes of scriptural reflection and lifting up prayer concerns on Mondays, January 10 and January 24 from 7:15-8:30 p.m. in the conference room.

The Mothers Touch: Vietnam

Sponsored by Lutheran Hour Ministries, Orphan Grain Train and the LWML, *The Mothers Touch* is designed to reach out to the lost souls of Vietnam with the caring touch of Christ. Women's Ministries of the VLC will be coordinating this mission project in early 2005. Watch for publicity and the opportunity to help fill care packages for our sisters in Vietnam.

WE ARE A CHURCH FAMILY

Each month, a member will share his/ her personal conviction about being a member of the Village Lutheran Church and why they support this ministry.

For the Elwell family, stewardship is about responding to the blessings God has provided our family. It is also about taking a leap of faith. We, like every family at VLC, have been both blessed and challenged over the years. But, through our family's twenty-year history at this church, we have always been protected and nurtured by God. We have learned that by giving more than we feel comfortable, we are blessed multiple times over. We've agreed to give up the rational excuses as to why not to give and have learned to just do it.

Sometimes it is easy to hear God's call, sometimes not. Right now, we believe God is calling us to help further His mission through the worship and outreach programs at Village Lutheran Church.

The church has always been here for all of us, in times both good and bad. This is a time when we need to be here for our church.

In the event you haven't done it yet, take the leap of faith. God always provides and continues to reward.

Here's wishing you all a blessed and prosperous New Year.

The Elwells (Tim and Joy, Diana, Ryan and Ian)

MUSIC MINISTRY AT VLC – BURST INTO SONGS OF JOY



“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’...Burst into songs of joy together.” (Isaiah 52)



THANK YOU to all of the choirs and music ensembles for your contributions to our holiday worship. There will be a holiday choir potluck supper in the lunchroom at 6:00 p.m. on January 6, before the Epiphany worship service. Please bring a dish to pass and some holiday cheer for a time of fellowship and fun.

YOUTH CHOIR – Rehearsals January 6, 13, 20, and 27 all from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the MPR. Services 16, 23, and 30 with 8:15 a.m. warm-ups for the 9:00 a.m. services. If you have any questions, please call George Heath at 337-0207 x1012 or e-mail at GHeath@vlc-ny.org.

CHANCEL CHOIR - We will sing for the Epiphany Service on January 6 and resume regular rehearsals on Thursday, January 13. We will be singing at the 9:00 a.m. service on the remaining Sundays in January.

FAITHWALK - We will resume Monday night rehearsals on January 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the Concordia chapel. We will participate in the Total Family Worship service at 10:45 a.m. on January 23 (following the "Off the Page" Bible study).



We hope that everyone had a chance to view the terrific student art work which was displayed in the Friendship Room during the month of December. Congratulations to the winning raffle ticket holders and many thanks to Nicole Zaza, Molly Nagel, Dina Foster-Osbourne, Kevin Cook, and the parents who worked so hard to coordinate this effort.

The Chapel School adopted twenty families for Christmas this year. We want to thank all of our parents, students, faculty and staff who donated Christmas gifts for our Christmas families. Many families had a much brighter Christmas because of your generosity.

Eastchester Community Action Program was the recipient of our November chapel offerings. Our faculty and students brought in nearly 2,000 food items for ECAP. Along with the food items a check was also sent to help this worthy cause.

There were six Chapel School Christmas programs this year. Special thanks to our music teachers Marcia Kollmann and George Heath for their tireless and extraordinary work with our students and to all of the teachers and teacher aides who do such a great job with our children every day.

If you or someone you know is interested in enrolling a student at The Chapel School, please contact the school office for information. We will continue to run Open Houses for parents of prospective students throughout the winter and spring. Many classes are already reaching capacity for the 2005-2006 school year.

The date for the Fifth Annual Chapel School Golf Outing has been set. It will be Tuesday, June 22 at Leewood Golf Club. The committee has already met a few times getting the outing organized. We are currently looking for sponsors for the outing. Sponsorships run from \$300.00 to \$10,000. This is a great fundraiser/friend raiser for our school. Save the date and play a round of golf, enjoy a great brunch and dinner and the fellowship of many. Contact Kevin Cook if you are interested in becoming a sponsor.



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Village Youth

Voyagers ~ Grades 3-6
Lifers ~ Grades 7-8
Crusaders ~ Grades 9-12

JOURNEY of FAITH



January
2005

This year the Youth Groups remain unchanged.

The Voyagers Youth Group consists of 3 - 6 grade and is run primarily by Erika.

The Confirmation II (7th Grade) and Confirmation III (8th Grade) constitute the Lifers Youth Group. Michael Schultz and Pastor Hartwell will be the primary leaders for this group.

Finally, the Crusader Youth Group is 9 - 12 grade, and will be lead by Erika and Michael.

VOYAGERS: GRADES 3 – 6

Meetings: Voyagers will meet Thursday nights from 6:00-7:00 p.m. We will usually meet in the Multi-Purpose Room. In January we will meet on the 6th, 20th and 27th. Please call Erika with any questions.

LIFERS: GRADES 7 – 8

Meetings: Lifers regular meeting night will now be Thursdays, from 6:00 -7:30 p.m. We will usually meet in the Art Room. In January we will meet on the 6th, 20th and 27th.

Confirmation Retreat - January 7 - 9, 2005. More information on exact times will be in the mail. If you have been unable to give us a definite answer as to whether you can please contact Erika ASAP. The Retreat Center is now, full but we will try to get a spot for you.

The Wounded Spirit - Youth Bible Study, Sundays, January 23 - February 6, 2005. This is our second set of Bible Studies this year. More Information below!!!

CRUSADERS: GRADES 9 – 12

Meetings: We will meet on Sundays....sometimes mornings, sometimes evenings. In January we will meet on the 16th for a breakfast meeting. (Youth Room at 10:15 a.m.)

Ice Skating - Sunday, January 23. Watch the Youth Board and Bulletin for the exact time of this. Cost \$12.00 plus snack money.

The Wounded Spirit - Youth Bible Study, Sundays, January 23 - February 6, 2005. This is our second set of Bible Studies this year. More Information below!!!

LIFERS AND CRUSADERS

The Wounded Spirit - Youth Bible Study, Sundays, 1/23,1/30, and 2/6 , 9:00 - 10:15 a.m., (Art Room). We have all experienced bullying....as givers and/or takers and/or witnesses.....and IT HURTS. Sticks and stones, names and harsh words....they ALL HURT. Explore your feelings. Consider how your behavior affects those around you. Learn about how JESUS treated those who were different, less attractive, or unpopular. Discover how you can reflect Jesus, the model of nobility and strength, in how you treat those who are weaker. With God's help, be transformed and renewed and healed. We have great leaders lined up for this, including our own Crusader Youth, Peter Burroughs and Sarah Jahnke, and Youth Leader, Michael Schultz.

VOYAGERS, LIFERS & CRUSADERS

CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING—For children in Preventive Services and Protective Custody in the Mt. Vernon and New Rochelle area. Many Thanks to all those who have participated in this. You have made a difference!!

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!!

New Deacon Training Program



How many pastors does it take to run a church? According to Pastor Hartwell, the answer is, "Ask a different question." Hartwell recently spoke about the start of a new Deacon Training program for churches in the Bronx and Westchester, meeting at the Village Lutheran Church. Hartwell explained his answer: "In the early days of the church, the apostles came to understand that there were too many ministry opportunities for the limited amount of pastors and evangelists to serve. The apostles therefore decided to consecrate Deacons (both men and women) to assist the pastors and the church in their mission of "making disciples of all nations." The question is not how many pastors you need, but how many of the baptized can assist the pastor in sharing the message of God's love."

In more recent history the Atlantic District began a Deacon Training program (similar to a Deacon training program in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America that began earlier) which provided two years of academic training and a year of field work (concurrent with the second year of academic training) that prepares men and women to assist in churches as a Deacon. This fall, Westchester became the latest Atlantic District site for this Deacon training with a class meeting at the Village Lutheran Church.

Deacons in Training (DIT) study the Gospels, the Epistles, the Old Testament, Lutheran Confessions and History, Missiology and pastoral formation. Along with this academic education DIT's receive practical training in areas of church life including leading devotions, assisting in worship, leading Bible studies and prayer groups, creating programs and events and making sick and homebound calls. Registration is open for students each fall with the two years of study being repeated, so that after two years each student, no matter when they begin the program, will have received the complete training.

The Westchester site meets on Wednesdays from 7:30-10:00 p.m. and currently has five students enrolled. The cost of tuition is currently only \$300 per year along with the cost of books. Call Pastor Hartwell for more information at (914) 337-0207 or Pastorh@VLC-NY.ORG to receive a packet or e-mail of Deacon Registration Materials.

FOCUS ON WORSHIP

"Nations Shall Come to Your Light"



In American culture, the arrival of New Year's Day means that the holiday season is officially over. However, in our church calendar, we conclude this holy season on January 6 with the celebration of Epiphany—the traditional story of the three wisemen who came to worship Jesus. In fact, Epiphany has a season all its own which lasts from January 6 through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (variously known as Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday and Shrove Tuesday). During this time, we celebrate God's love which is given freely to the whole world. For while Jesus was born as a Jewish baby and ministered first among his own people, we know that God's plan of salvation was to reach out to all people with the light of Christ.

In observation of this January "holy-day," please join us for worship service on **Thursday, January 6**. There will be a special Children's Epiphany Service at 9:00 am and then a community Festival Epiphany Service with choirs at 7:30 pm. As the prophet Isaiah wrote: "*Arise, shine; for your light has come.*"

JANUARY 1-2

- New Year celebration of "The Name of Jesus"

JANUARY 6

- Epiphany Services at 9:00am and 7:30pm

JANUARY 9

- Baptism of our Lord

JANUARY 16

- Second Sunday after the Epiphany

JANUARY 23

- Third Sunday after the Epiphany
- "Off the Page and Into the Heart" Bible study at 9:00am

JANUARY 30

- Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
- "Off the Page and Into the Heart" week 2



Never be Thirsty Again.

We are all familiar with the beloved passage of Jesus in John chapter 4: “...*whoever drinks of the water that I give will never be thirsty again.*” What a wonderful promise of refreshment and new life in Jesus!

Through the steady efforts and long hours of VLC members Jim Troncone and Peter Voges, our beautiful “Fountain of Life” at the entrance to church has been renovated and is once again a striking welcome to all. The men analyzed and re-furbished the copper troughs and the plumbing beneath, and painstakingly stripped away decades of decay, allowing the original metal to shine again. A new layer of black river rocks offers a suggestion of the streams of the Holy Land where Jesus preached and offered Himself as a solution to all our weariness and cares. We can witness the presence of Christ as the true “Fountain of Life” as we enter our house of worship.

And the grand statue of Jesus, carved from a single piece of native American walnut in the early 1960s, is once again proudly visible in all its glory. Copies of a 1963 MY CHURCH article detailing the statue’s creation are available at the fountain. Thank you, Jim and Peter, for renovating a truly inspiring focus of our beautiful church, to the glory of God and the enrichment of His people here at Village Lutheran Church.

Parish Health News

Yoga classes are on Monday at 7 p.m. in the Multi-purpose room. Drop in. Cost is \$10. Call Faith Forliano at 725-8035 for more information.

The Village Lutheran Church is a proud member of the Lutheran Counseling Center (LCC) Membership Assistance Program (MAP). Through this partnership, VLC members and friends can access professional counseling at the rate of only \$25 per session (for up to 4 sessions). LCC also takes major health insurances and uses a sliding scale. Call Pastor Hartwell to arrange for the MAP sessions. Isn't your mental health and happiness worth the time? LCC provides individual, couple, and family counseling, professional, yet Christian. Call (914) 337-0207 (ext. 1022) for details.

There’s So Much More We Can Do!

One of the major motivations for building our new educational facility was to expand the scope and number of activities for church members and community groups that could not be accommodated in the cramped situation of just a few years ago. Now our wonderful school building hums all day with 320 children receiving an excellent Christian education, and then buzzes well into the night with various groups and organizations using the gym, classrooms, lunchroom, the multi-purpose room and more. We’ve truly touched hundreds more lives with the love of Christ through this great building!

But there’s more we could do! And what’s in the way? The building indebtedness. The need to pay down the loan that financed our wonderful building demands resources of dollars and focus that interfere with providing more activities to live and share the Gospel. So what shall we do?

On December 4 more than thirty VLC members - volunteers all, and enthusiastically led by campaign chairs Joy and Tim Elwell - gathered to begin the planning and orientation process for the next phase of our capital campaign. During the next few months all members and friends will be invited to participate - with a financial commitment, yes, but also importantly, to volunteer to help in some specific way. The mantra we’re using in this campaign is: One Task, One Person. Together, with the Lord’s blessing, we *can* do so much more. We *can* conquer this financial obstacle and get on with our business: *to know, live, and share the love of Jesus Christ.* Say “YES” to this important use of your time!



Check out the VLC & Chapel School Piano Bookshop located in the Friendship Room. The VLC features an honor-system book & resource shop. Each month at least 5 new resources will be featured that Pastor Hartwell or someone from the staff recommends. Simply drop a check made out to the VLC in the payment box. You may also use a credit card form.

Memorial/Honored Voices

Thank you to former member
Irmgard Walters, now moved to Arizona,
for her kind Christmas gift in thanksgiving
for the ministry of the
Village Lutheran Church

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