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## Waiting for Better

By now you've likely heard the story about the talk my aerospace engineer dad had with me years ago after it became clear I might wind up being a pastor. By that time both my mother and father had spent years in various leadership roles at the Lutheran church we attended in San Pedro. *So it was with a knowing look that my father asked me whether I really wanted to have a job where the problems were never solved.* Yes, I reasoned, in church we don't design and build airplanes that come off an assembly line and fly away. I realized too how challenging and complicated working with other people could be. He and my mother sometimes talked among themselves about those long and tedious monthly voters' meetings my father attended. (Our church had separate monthly meetings of elders and voters. While elders were elected, any adult [male] church member could be a voter. Imagine a monthly council meeting with 20-30 [or more] self-appointed people whose terms of office never expired!) Nowadays I imagine that each of those monthly voters' meetings must have been like a contentious congregational meeting. This, I thought, was the factual basis of the fair-warning my father wanted to me to hear.

Then again, maybe there was more to it. After ordination I noticed something that added another layer of meaning to my father's warning. I noticed how, without exception, each of the congregations I served had a tragic past that left them in worse shape than they were before. Sometimes these stories centered around a chronically ill or substance-abusing pastor or one who died suddenly. In another instance, a congregation that nearly disbanded recovered only to be torn apart years later by a dispute over morality, culture, and theology. Recently, I've observed first hand how civil litigation and negative publicity can undermine a congregation's ability to retain and attract new members and complicate the search for a new pastor. When my father warned me about a job where the problems were never solved, I did not consider how tragic circumstances not only affect individuals and households, but also church institutions. Many of the problems engendered by those tragic circumstances don't go away.

Thankfully, the tragic side of church life does not burden us constantly. With a bit of tact, respectful awareness of each other's vulnerabilities, genuine kindness, a willingness to let some hurts go, and sometimes actual forgiveness, we experience with each other God's precious gift of community. Our awareness of the blessings that flow from it go a long way toward making the tragic side of life, including the tragic side of church life, more manageable.

Apart from the strength we draw directly from each other, it's my observation that the way we cope with tragedy is simply to wait for a better day. As I write these lines during the first week of Advent, a time of waiting, I expect you'll be reading them shortly after the start of the new year, which people everywhere seem to welcome as a hopeful beginning. Yet, if you've heard me on Sundays lately you may know that waiting doesn't make our problems go away. Rather, they hide God's grace from us. That's why I can't simply tell you that God is kind, good, and loving and leave it at that.

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## Prayer List

**For those who mourn:** The family of Jonathon Kenion, the family of Sarah Stafford, the family of Mollie Murphy, the family of Scott Steen, the family of Tom Creighton, the family of Laverne Johnson, the family of Lawrence Harper, the family of Kim Thornhill, the family of Allene Korineck, the family of Mary Armstrong.

**For healing:** Phil Duncan, Jeff Mellstrom, Diane Wilson, Sandy Williams, Jerrome Duncan, Ethel Grissom, Tom Wortham, Sylvia Ford, Bernice Smith, Sissy & Lloyd Thornhill, David Stankov, David Glover & family, Dick Barnes, Ron Weekly, Jr., Carlos Paiva, Sherman Banks, Sylvester Scott, Millie Nobles, George Williams, Phyllis Taylor, Dan Miller.

*It's our custom to have a prayer list in The Shepherd's Voice. This is a partial list of those for whom we pray. If you have someone you would like on the list, or would like to be taken off the list, please call or e-mail Judy Sonier at the church office.*

### January Birthdays

1/2 Aiden Chisum  
 1/5 Dominick Campbell  
 1/12 Tiffany Williams  
 1/14 Valerie Jones  
 1/23 Kendrea Emery  
 Katia Engelhardt  
 1/25 Adriana Glenn  
 1/27 Jetalia Fairley  
 1/28 Carolyn Spurlock

### Baptismal Birthdays

1/5 Keyonna Horton  
 1/16 Kathy Korn  
 1/17 Brent Callum  
 1/28 Lloyd Bailer  
 Aishah Chisum

Chaplain Chim Mandalia describes the work of the Lutheran Maritime Mission during the CTS trip to the International Seafarer's Mission in Long Beach two years ago. You could be a part of this picture in 2015 (see page 3).



## News and Notes

The second half of our annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25th, after services. Copies of the Annual Report will be available for your review in the Narthex on Sunday, January 18th.

In aid of getting the Annual Report ready by the 18th, all parties that have input to the report should get it to Judy at the church office no later than Wednesday, January 8th. You can deliver a hardcopy document in person, or email a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file to [office@ctsaltadena.org](mailto:office@ctsaltadena.org).

David & Aidan Chisum, Pr. Witte, and Bill Korn delivered your generous contributions to the International Seamen's Center in Long Beach last Sunday afternoon. We spent some time touring the facility and talking with Brother Samson (Pr. Chim Mandela's assistant), Ron Nelson from Synod, and others about methods for spreading the good news of the Lutheran Maritime Mission to the general community. We ended with a tour of the harbor areas we could reach without security clearance. Even at some distance, the operations at the harbor are most impressive. David Chisum is working with Brother Samson to arrange for a more detailed tour, including a visit to a working cargo ship, for sometime in the Spring. If you're interested, please let David know, as it takes some preparation to get security clearances.

December 21st was a day of joy and sorrow. Our Christmas Pageant was an unqualified and very well-received success. Conceived, developed, directed, and conducted by Sandi Holden, the Pageant demonstrated how even a small church such as ours can make a special presentation that adds so much to the story of Jesus' birth.

The sorrow came later, when Sandi announced that she was resigning from her post as Musician & Choir Director. Over the last decade, Sandi has become an increasingly important part of our musical life at CTS. Her many talents, creativity, energy, and her ability to teach those of us, young and old, who participated in the music program were of great value and will be sorely missed.

Your church leadership will be meeting early this month to work on a long-term plan for a new musician or musicians at CTS. In the meantime, Brian Havey and MacKenzie Wright are available to fill in week-to-week.



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To acquire the faith we need to deal with tragic circumstances and with problems that cannot be solved we need more. We need the gospel that demonstrates how in Jesus Christ God's goodness only becomes apparent to us as it emerges from those very problems and the tragic events that engender them. It's not about waiting for a better day. Rather it's about entering an entirely different realm of life where God's heaven of grace stretches over our heads in all directions so that we can live in confidence and at peace right now.

One of your friends in Christ,  
Pastor Mark Witte

# Serving in Worship

January 2015	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
<b>Liturgical Day</b>	2 Christmas	Baptism of Our Lord	2 Epiphany	3 Epiphany
<b>Musician</b>	Brian Havey	TBA	TBA	MacKenzie Wright
<b>Deacon/</b>	Dolores Scott	Bill Korn	Garrett Biehle	Eric Mulfinger
<b>Server/ Acolyte</b>	Bill Korn Keinon Chin-Robinson	Dede Campbell	Emerald Bailer Zoie Chisum	Garrett Biehle
<b>Lector</b>	Valerie Jones	Wayne Campbell	Valerie Jones	Marcia Brown
<b>Offertory Prayer</b>	Deacon	Deacon	Deacon	Deacon
<b>Ushers</b>	Valerie Jones Zetta Robinson	Jordan Boye Wayne Campbell	Jeff Mellstrom Zetta Robinson	Jordan Boye Marcia Brown
<b>Communion Care</b>	Dolores Scott	Rita Mello	Cece Guiar	Ruth Creighton
<b>The Lessons</b>	Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20 Ephesians 1:3-14 John 1:[1-9] 10-18	Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11	1 Sam 3:1-10 [11-20] Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20
<b>Social Hour</b>	Katherine Ellis- Schoepke	IT COULD BE YOU!	IT COULD BE YOU!	Sandy Williams

# January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 10:00 am WELCA
4	5	6	7 Deadline For Annual Report Submissions	8	9	10 9:30 am Food Pantry Team I
11	12	13	14	15 12:00 pm PACT Meet- ing	16	17
18 10:00 am Annual Report Available	19	20 7:00 pm Church Council	21	22 6:00 pm AA/CA Secretaries'	23	24
25 11:45 am Cong. Meeting	26 6:00-9:00 pm Bad Weather Shelter	27	28	29	30	31

Sunday Service with Holy Communion, starts at 10:00 am every Sunday, followed by refreshments in the Social Hall

CHRIST THE  
SHEPHERD  
LUTHERAN  
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**[www.ctsaltadena.org](http://www.ctsaltadena.org)**

## Worship

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. The Eucharist  
Nursery Care Available

## Our Mission

We, the people of God at Christ the Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church are called to witness to Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected, in our worship, our daily lives, and through our Christian service in the community. In faithfulness to this calling, we are committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and compelled by God's love for all people, we commit ourselves to invite and welcome ALL into our church regardless of race, nationality, culture, social status, or sexual orientation.

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Mark Witte, Pastor  
Judith Sonier, Office Manager

Jeff Mellstrom, Financial Secretary

Sandy Williams, President, Property ('16)  
Peter Holden, Vice President ('16)  
William Korn, Treasurer ('15)  
Garrett Biehle, Secretary, Stewardship ('17)  
David Chisum, Social Ministry ('17)

Katherine Ellis-Schoepke, Christian  
Education ('16)  
Valerie Jones, Worship Arts ('16)  
Zetta Robinson, Evangelism ('16)  
Lennon Holden, Youth

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