



# Christ The Servant Lutheran Church

## 2007 ANNUAL MINISTRY REPORT

*Prepared March 2, 2008*

*God's purpose for Christ The Servant Lutheran Church  
is to grow spiritually in Jesus Christ  
and use our hearts, hands, and gifts to serve all people.*

### *Guiding Principles*

- 1. Jesus is the risen Lord.*
- 2. Everything is done with prayer and Scripture.*
- 3. Everyone is important.*
- 4. God works through us.*
- 5. All things are possible with God.*
- 6. People are more important than things.*
- 7. We are stewards of God's gifts.*

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# Congregational Health and Growth

## State of the Church

You don't have to look too hard to see the power of the Holy Spirit working here at Christ The Servant Lutheran. Our numbers have grown in 2007; but more importantly our spiritual health has reached new heights. As you review the annual reports compiled in the following pages, think of the growing ministries and consider how you can serve and guide these ministries or create a new one. Also, pray that we will find ways to include more people in our church family and that we provide the tools for spiritual growth so that everyone can experience the freedom of God's love.

The Congregational Council received direction from the congregation at our Congregational Meeting of December 2007 to investigate the long-range needs of CTS Lutheran. It is obvious that our existing facilities will soon limit our ability to grow and meet our current and future needs. We need more room for education, more room for worship, more room for fellowship, more room for storage, etc. As you read the following reports think of how the future of these ministries may be affected by the lack of adequate facilities.

—Lori Shelton, Congregational Council President 2007

## Annual Pastoral Report

Imagine you are worshipping the Sunday when baptisms are about to take place. The pastor just asked the parents if they will fulfill the following responsibilities:

*“to live with [the newly baptized] among God’s faithful people; bring them to the word of God and the holy supper; teach them the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments; place in their hands the holy scriptures, and nurture them in faith and pray so that they may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace. Do you promise to help your children grow in the Christian faith and life?” (ELW 228)*

The parents say, “I do.”

Now the pastor turns to the sponsors, asking them virtually the same questions. Then the pastor looks at you, seated in the congregation, beaming with joy at the prospect of newly-baptized “little ones” being incorporated into the Body of Christ. The pastor catches your eye, holds your attention, and asks you, and you, and you: *People of God, do you promise to support (name) and pray for them in their new life in Christ?* Pause. “Whoa,” you hesitate, “me? What has this got to do with me, or my church friends, or anybody in Christ?”

Answers to these questions are found as we live together as God's baptized people. This annual Pastoral Report is a glimpse of the way your friends and you have labored to fulfill the baptismal vows in and through the congregation of Christ The Servant Lutheran Church. In baptism, each of us is called to participate in God's ongoing redemption of all people and things.

You receive inspiration and guidance from the Purpose Statement you discerned in October 2004: *God's purpose for Christ The Servant Lutheran Church is to grow spiritually in Jesus Christ and to use our hearts, hands, and gifts to serve all people.* You and I have a responsibility to keep working on God's purpose for this congregation.

1. Let us review some of the ways you have lived *to grow spiritually in Jesus.*

By God's grace, you have been empowered by the Spirit of Christ for taking your part in fulfilling God's purpose for us. You came forward to be trained as Assisting Minister for Homebound Communion, serving those who cannot come around the altar table on Sunday mornings. You worshiped in increasing numbers and spirit, with an average Sunday attendance of 113, 8.5% more than 2006. You joined adult Bible studies, including new gatherings following the results of a survey about adult education. You brought your children to grow spiritually in Sunday school. Sam Gaines, Ariel Jennings, Kirsten Nack, and Courtney Nack were confirmed. You came in great numbers to learn from the Rev. Dr. Dennis Schurter, who led a series in the Adult Forum, entitled "How the Bible Came to Be." Carlton Wendel began teaching a major Bible course on Sunday mornings.

You sang and played instruments so that our worship was inspirational. Brave souls told stories to help make the Vigil of Easter an intergenerational worship experience. You were there when the new paschal candle was lighted. Worship attendance grew so much that more *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* books were purchased.

Two infants (Karissa Thiele and Brayden Bogdan) were baptized. Margot Durdin, Ardys and Dick Gentry, and Evelyn Barthold were received by affirmation of faith. Amber Meyer; Eva Bogdan, Brandi Bogdan, Brittany Bogdan, and Brianna Bogdan; Ruth Johnson; Martha Ellithorpe; Christina Strickland; Andy Waite; Dottie Allen; Barbara Barnick Ben-Ezra and Sarah Ben-Ezra; Robin Blades; Bev Clow; and Mike and Lana Cruse transferred from ELCA congregations. Martin Converse chose to be an Associate Member.

Margot Durdin, Miriam Jackson, Eleanor Hoffpauir, and Tom Jackson joined the church triumphant. Families mourned the deaths of loved ones. Concerned about the spiritual welfare of every member, you authorized the council to review the level of activity of our roster, and those who had not participated in the congregation were released from membership.

In February, we learned the results of the *Natural Church Development* survey. The greatest strength was "Empowering Leadership," followed by "Loving Relationships." Our maximum leverage factor was "need-oriented evangelism," and a Health Team was formed to diagnose the underlying causes for this result and to plan strategies to improve our energy in evangelizing. Lori Shelton is the convener.

2. In fulfilling the second part of the Purpose Statement, *to use our hearts, hands, and gifts to serve all people*, you were generous in a multitude of ways, giving hundreds of hours and dollars.

Service ministry continues as a signature characteristic of the congregation. The Empty Bowl Project netted a record amount to feed the hungry people who use the services of Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and the Denton Community Food Room. Lois Plato's team continues

to inspire us all. Laborers for the Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen offer help every Thursday at noon, and the Servant Garden produces fresh produce for the soup kitchen.

Support for Lutheran Campus Ministry-Denton is given through Tuesday suppers, board membership, budget contribution, and welcome for all UNT or TWU students. Pastor Celene Welch led a highly successful celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lutheran Campus Ministry at a fundraising event in November. CTS Lutheran hosted two tables of people, one of which won the best prize for thematic development. John Plato served as chair of the Lutheran Campus Ministry-Denton board.

Council members became liaisons with ministry groups. The council approved monies to be used for starting new ministries. A Leadership Workshop was held September 8. The Youth Planning Team looked for ways to engage our youth.

The work of the office underwent a significant change. Tonya Garcia resigned the end of August, and Janice Heidlberger was hired as Office Administrator the beginning of September. The office computer and copier have been replaced with major upgrades. The work of Office Administrator expanded in hours worked, tasks performed, and excellence of service.

My service beyond the parish includes serving on the following boards or committees: Lutheran Campus Ministry-Denton, "ex officio" member; NT-NL Synod campus ministry committee, secretary; Denton Area Hospital Chaplaincy Board, secretary; Dental State School Ethics Committee, member; Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, member representing NT-NL Synod; Covenant Cluster for cooperation in theological education of three seminaries, secretary. I was elected Dean of the North Central West Conference of the NT-NL Synod at the synod assembly in April.

The congregation is looking back to see God's blessing on our ministry and forward to the challenge of living in trust of God who provides, redeems, and continues to transform us into the likeness of Christ Jesus. With thankfulness, we acknowledge the sacrifices of those who gave of their treasure, talents, and time to build this congregation. With hopefulness, we are trusting our Lord Jesus to renew us with forgiveness, joy, and gifts. With expectation, we are being given vision of ways to proclaim the gospel to our neighbors.

In baptism, Jesus changed you and me from sinners to saints. He created us to be partners with him in redeeming the world. He gave us the delightful and daunting duty of making him known in the world. What are ways you could join me in being an evangelizing person? How can this congregation keep on passing on the faith in Jesus Christ that makes the difference of life over death? To God alone be the glory, now and forever!

—*Your servant and sister in Christ, The Rev. Dr. Peggy Ogden-Howe, Pastor*

## Financial Report

This report is intentionally omitted.

—*Alice Gill, Financial Secretary*

## Office Administrator Report

When I accepted the call to fulfill the position of Office Administrator in September 2007, I took seriously the statement, “I will, with the help of God!” I continue to remember this promise to myself and our congregation.

It’s amazing how God has made so many experiences He has seen me through come together in my role here at Christ The Servant Lutheran as Office Administrator: legal administrative assistant experience, freelance experience in web development and design, a way-to-analytical and questioning mind, years of doctoral coursework in music and liturgy of the Christian church before and after Martin Luther posted the *95 Thesis*, a childhood enriched by Luther League and Lutheran Sunday school taught by some amazing, scripturally knowledgeable individuals, and a love of working to fulfill whatever spiritual gifts God has given me and enabling others to do the same.

The last three months of 2007 saw a plethora of changes in the environment of the church office: from a physical and visible standpoint, from a technological standpoint, from a publication standpoint, and from a human standpoint. The office was completely overhauled from furniture arrangement to computer and copier tools available to do the work of the church office. (Thank you to Michael Peterson for assistance with networking and informational technology issues!) The bulletin and newsletter publications is redesigned; church web development is now done in-house; and the sounds on answering machines and coming down the church halls to greet those in the building during the week have changed. What big changes!

As I continue to learn how to best fulfill my role at Christ The Servant Lutheran as Office Administrator, I enjoy better learning who it is I go to church with on a given Sunday morning, and I enjoy using the gifts God gives me to be creative in managing the challenges of the church office. I celebrate with you that we are living in God’s amazing grace.

—*Your sister in Christ, Janice Heidelberg, Office Administrator*

## 40th Anniversary Planning Committee

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee held their first meeting on Thursday, January 31, 2008. Members present were: Cindy Bellefeuille and Donna Kulle, co-chairs; Carlton Wendel; Raelene Gibbons; Yvonne Poppe; and Ruth Johnson. We developed our purpose statement: The 40th Anniversary Planning Committee will lead the congregation to celebrate 40 years. We set our goals: to plan, to announce, to invite, to promote and to unite our membership. We also developed an initial plan of the steps we want to take and activities we want to include.

—*Donna Kulle, Co-chair, 40th Anniversary Planning Committee*

## Natural Church Development Health Team

The Natural Church Development Health Team was created in 2007 and consists of Betty Finden, Raelene Gibbons, Mike Minard, Greg Thiele, Carlton Wendel, Lori Shelton and Pastor Peggy Ogden-Howe. This team was created as a result of the Natural Church Development survey that members of Christ The Servant Lutheran took in December 2006. The results of the survey were that while our congregation did not score particularly low in any measurement of a healthy church, our lowest score was found in "need-oriented evangelism". The Health Team is now working to address the issue of how we can make "need-oriented evangelism" a priority in our congregation.

—Lori Shelton, Convener, Natural Church Development Health Team

## Hard Hats

The Hard Hats were intended to be a volunteer group of handymen and women who could perform routine maintenance around the church. This group completed numerous tasks in early 2007 but is currently without a coordinator. If you would like to learn more about the opportunity to lead this servant team, contact Henry Howe at 940-323-8786.

—Henry Howe

## Worship and Music Ministries

### Worship and Music Team

Meeting regularly to plan and evaluate our worship services, the Worship and Music Team participants are: Harriet Ames, Karen Boyer; Raelene Gibbons, Janice Heidlberger, Mary Jennings, Susan Locklin; Jan and Dewey Johnson, Carolyn Kacena, Woody Liljedahl, Mary and John Rosenboom, Herb Schaake, and Jill Waite.

### Services Planned During 2007

- Global Ministries Sunday during Epiphany in February, followed by an international potluck
- Ash Wednesday
- Five Midweek Lenten Services (“The Journey of Discipleship”), preceded by soup suppers
- Palm Sunday, with *Lenten Canticles* cantata sung by the choir
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter Vigil (new)
- Festival Easter Worship Services
- Reformation Observance and potluck
- Two Services on Christmas Eve, with music preceding

Since the introduction of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the congregation has become familiar with two new liturgies: Setting 10, a liturgy accompanied by familiar hymns, and Setting 8, a joyous, rhythmical setting worthy of toe-tapping. The formats from the new ELW were used

for the Lenten mid-week services and the Holy Week Services. A paschal candle enhanced our worship services.

Worship at Christ The Servant Lutheran is always a celebration. Accompaniments to our worship services have included: a piñata and colorful streamers on Palm Sunday, bells rung for every “alleluia” on Easter Sunday, cheese cake served at Pentecost, and a procession out to the Servants Garden on Earth Day.

Thanks to Altar Guild members Mary Jennings, Karen Boyer, Susan Locklin and Jill Waite; to Mary Jennings for the children’s “Worship Kits;” to Carolyn Kacena for coordinating each week’s worship participants; to Mary and John Rosenboom, music directors; to our organist, Herb Schaake; and to Max Young for organizing communion for the homebound; to Janice Heidlberger for planning the 2007 Midweek Lenten Services; and to Raelene Gibbons for planning the Lenten soup suppers. If you would like to be a part of a lively, creative group, become a member of the Worship and Music Team. We even have lunch at our meetings! (We call it a “Bach’s Lunch.”)

—Jan Johnson, Coordinator, Worship and Music Team

## Worship Leaders

Schedules for worship leaders were produced seven times in 2007. Currently we have 14 Assistant Ministers with four more volunteers awaiting training; 25 readers; eight acolytes; and seven offering counters. Additionally we have five hospitality/ushering teams, averaging 10 members each.

Acolytes. Lisa Shaw oversees the acolytes at Christ The Servant Lutheran.

Altar Guild. The Altar Guild is represented by Susan Locklin and Mary Jennings. If you wish to assist here, let one of them know so they can schedule you to for the worship time you prefer and ensure you are trained.

Assisting Ministers. We have lost five experienced assisting ministers since September; let me know if you are willing to undertake training and serve in this area.

Bread Bakers. Many people help the Altar Guild by baking the communion bread—let me know if you are interested in serving in this area. There is a bread recipe available for you.

Cantors. Occasionally we need a cantor to help lead the service, for example, the singing of the Psalm, the Kyrie or the Hymn of Praise. Talk to Mary Rosenboom, Director of Music, if you are interested in serving in this capacity.

Hospitality/Ushering Teams. The hospitality/ushering teams average 10 members each, but 16 members per team is ideal to cover both worship services, as well as special-events ushering needs. Several people have had to resign from this critical outreach service this year due to infirmity or age. If you are willing to greet, hand out bulletins, assist with the direction of communion and provide 8:30 a.m. acolyte support, please let me know. You can choose which worship time works best for you. Additionally, we need to replace one team leader, John Solberg, who wishes to focus his services elsewhere in the church. Contact John or me if you would be willing to undertake this duty. Other hospitality/usher team leaders are looking for 2009 co-leaders or leader replacements after many years of service. Now is a good time to ask

your team leader if he/she would like an assistant for 2008. Monty Naylor and Henry Howe are working on emergency procedures so that ushering teams can provide assistance in the case of a medical or weather emergency during worship.

Offering Counters. We can use more counters trained in the use of the special church software for tracking contributions. See Greg Thiele if you are interested in this ministry. He will see you get the necessary training.

As you can see, worship leadership involves a great many tasks. Substitutes and new participants in each of these critical areas are always welcomed. Let me know how you would like to participate in worship leadership at Christ The Servant Lutheran.

—Carolyn Kacena, Coordinator of Worship Leaders

## Altar Guild

Karen Boyer and Susan Locklin have had the pleasure of being co-coordinators of the Altar Guild for about three months now. We recognize all of our members and commend them on a wonderful job. We also appreciate their support. One of our goals is to increase our members in the New Year. We have scheduled May 10 for what we are calling “Banner Day.” We will be gathering people together to create wonderful new banners and repairing any old wonderful banners. We are having a great time and are learning a lot.

—Susan Locklin and Karen Boyer, Co-Coordinators, Altar Guild

## Homebound Communion

Assisting Ministers for Homebound Communion are selected and trained to distribute Communion to the sick or homebound who are unable to be present in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper on any given Sunday morning. This past year we have taken communion to several individuals most every Sunday. At the present time there are five congregation members, who are actively involved in this ministry. We each feel very blessed to be a part of this vital ministry of the congregation.

—Yvonne Poppe, Assisting Minister for Homebound Communion

## Instrumental Group: Hearts and Hands for Christ

Hearts and Hands for Christ (the instrumental group) with approximately 10 members under the direction of John Rosenboom has been rehearsing regularly and playing at various times during the year either for special music or as an accompaniment for hymn singing. Individuals and small groups of singers and instrumentalists were recruited for special music offerings during the worship services.

On December 9, the instrumentalists plus some guest players went “caroling” at some nursing homes in the area. Thanks go to Carolyn Kacena for making those arrangements. On

Christmas Eve this group also played a 30-minute concert of Christmas carols before each of the worship services. Once again, thanks to Carolyn Kacena for her help with this project.

We always have room for new members who are willing to play to the glory of God. No audition required! Come as you are. To those of you who now play an instrument in worship, Thank You and may God bless you!

—John Rosenboom, Director, Instrumental Group

## Music Ministry

Music has been varied this year at Christ The Servant Lutheran. Our choir has approximately 20 members and is under the direction of Mary Rosenboom. It has sung for worship on a regular basis. Hearts and Hands for Christ, the instrumental group with approximately 10 members under the direction of John Rosenboom, has been rehearsing regularly and playing at various times during the year either for special music or as an accompaniment for hymn singing. Individuals and small groups of singers and instrumentalists were recruited for special musical offerings and cantoring during worship services. The children have been singing together during the first 15 minutes of the Sunday school hour and have shared some of these songs at worship times.

On Palm Sunday, the choir and readers from the congregation presented the cantata, *Lenten Canticles, a Passion Cantata*, during the worship services. We sang *The Christmas Light* during the Sundays of Advent and also at Primrose Retirement Village on December 12. The children performed the musical, *Tails from the Manger*, at the worship service on December 9.

We always have room for new members who are willing to play or sing to the glory of God. No audition required! Come as you are. To those of you who now sing and play in worship, Thank You and may God bless you!

—Mary Rosenboom, Director of Music

## Tape Ministry

Marilyn and Roger Larson and Yvonne Poppe have been faithfully taking tapes of the Sunday morning worship services to shut-in members for several years now. It is a great way to stay in touch with our members, and it makes them feel like they are still a part of the church. Thanks to John Solberg for taping the services and to Kirk Locklin for being his substitute.

—Yvonne Poppe, for the Tape Ministry

# Bible Study and Fellowship Ministries

## Christian Education: Adult Forum

The Sunday morning Adult Forum was led by three individuals at various times during the year: Pastor Dennis Shurter, Henry Howe, and Carlton Wendel. Pastor Shurter led a five-week study on the history of the Bible, and Henry led sessions during most of the summer on Lutheran beliefs using the book “The Lutheran Handbook.” In September, Carlton began leading/facilitating a two-year, end-to-end study of the Bible using material obtained from Crossways International.

—*Carlton Wendel, member of Adult Christian Education Planning Team*

## Christian Education: Sunday School for Youth

Our year kicked off with Rally Day on August, 26. Student registration forms containing emergency information were completed by parents. Learners from PreK through college and even a few representatives from the work force brought backpacks, book bags and attachés for the “Blessing of the Backpacks” presided over by Ruth Johnson. Whether at school, at work, or at home, we are reminded that God is with us at all times and will guide us in our learning and decision making.

After prayerful consideration and discussion it was decided we would use the Witness curriculum from Augsburg for our students PreK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The teachers find the leadership guides useful and the students enjoy having their own workbooks. The curriculum “encourages kids to express their faith through witnessing and service to others” by putting an emphasis on developing faith traits such as patience, forgiveness, generosity, and cooperation. We currently have 14 active students in this age range being taught by Lisa Shaw, Elecia Pitman, Mary Jennings and myself.

Jake Blosser and Lori Shelton are reinforcing a spiritual foundation that will help guide our senior youth through their life challenges. We have four active senior high attendees.

During our Sunday morning gatherings in the sanctuary we are lead in uplifting music and song by Mary Rosenboom and Evelyn Barthold. We also recognize birthdays, visitors, and special accomplishments, and we close with prayer. With such an enthusiastic group, it wasn’t hard for the students to communicate their “eyewitness” accounts of the Christmas story in our production of *Tales from the Manger* on December 9. Their costume creations reflected their creativity.

From the youngest to the oldest this is a wonderful mix of loving and caring youth and teaching staff. We appreciate the prayers and support of Pastor Peggy and the congregation. We’ve got more excitement coming in the spring so watch for us.

—*Yours in Christ, Charlene Minard, Christian Education Coordinator*

## Kaffee Klatsch

We continue to grow: in numbers, in friendship, and in spirit. Thanks be to God! Our Tuesday morning meetings at Panera Bakery find 8 to 12 eager participants enjoying coffee and pastries, sharing and praying, studying and conspiring. Sharing of ourselves and praying together have forged and deepened friendships; studying of various literature has increased our knowledge of God's presence in our corporate lives, and our community has conspired to serve God in new and different ways. The books we have read and studied together this year are:

*Seasons Of Friendship: Naomi and Ruth as a Model for Relationship*, Marjory Bankson;  
*Cure For The Common Life*, Max Lucado;  
*Reclaiming the "L" Word*, Kelly Fryer; and  
*Abraham, A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*, Bruce Feiler.

Kaffee Klatsch started the "Love Bears" project as a ministry to the ill, hurting, lonely or anyone who a member or friend of the congregation thinks may need a lift. To date, approximately 74 stuffed animals that have spent time in the pews have been distributed.

Kaffee Klatsch members now carry tote bags in their vehicles, which are available to give to someone they encounter who appears to be in need. The bags were made of donated fabric with handles created from obsolete men's ties. They each contain a bottle of water, two granola bars, and an inscription of a benediction. Through the use of these bags, we hope to reach beyond our comfort zones to the "least of these" and, with God's help, expand our zones of active caring.

The coffee and pastries are harder to explain. You'll just have to join us!

—CJ Solberg, Kaffee Klatsch Leader

## Lutheran Men in Mission

All men of the congregation are included in the membership of the Lutheran Men in Mission of Christ The Servant Lutheran. The group meets monthly for a home-cooked breakfast, Bible study, and discussion of a relevant book. Currently a discussion of Michael Foss's book, *A Servant's Manual, Christian Leadership for Tomorrow*, is being led by Roger Ditzenberger.

Several men have been involved in servant project at Briarwood Retreat Center. Representatives also attended the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod men's gathering.

—Henry Howe, Lutheran Men in Mission Coordinator

## Midweek Bible Study

Midweek Bible Study met through most of the year on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. before adult choir rehearsal. We studied the first half of the book of Romans, followed by the Beatitudes as published in Fall 2007's *Lutheran Woman Today*. Attendance numbered between four and seven people. In the coming year, look for a change of name to this Bible study group, with a continued goal of delving deep into Scriptural text, to build friendly fluency

in God's Word in a Lutheran context and a historical context, and to learn how God's Word helps us today.

—*Janice Heidlberger, Moderator, Midweek Bible Study*

## Patchwork Dinners

The Patchwork dinners are monthly casual dinner parties with members and friends of the congregation meeting in groups of 8 to 10 persons at the home of a designated host. Each month the roles of host are assumed by different teams of participants. The host team is assisted in the dinner preparation by a designated co-host team. The remaining dinner guests come to enjoy dinner and make better acquaintances with the other participants during conversation around the table. Each month the grouping around the table changes according to the Patchwork matrix. The host team, co-host team, and one guest couple are designated each month. The host team then invites the two or more people to join their dinner. The host also selects the date and time for the dinner on the month they are hosting. The Patchwork Dinner "season" runs three to five months depending on the number of participants in the matrix. The host can also select the venue for the dinner. Some hosts have chosen to have picnics; others have hosted mystery dinners, and others have chosen to host a traditional dinner around the family table.

In the spring of 2007, twelve teams were involved with dinners conducted in February through May. Again during the fall, twelve teams participated from October through January. A separate sign-up is conducted before the fall and spring periods in order to permit new members to join or existing participants to take a break to accommodate other activities.

All members and friends of Christ The Servant Lutheran are invited to enroll for the Patchwork Dinners and participate in the fellowship around the dinner tables. This is a wonderful way to meet and welcome new members and visitors of Christ The Servant Lutheran into our ministry.

—*Henry Howe, Patchwork Dinner Coordinator*

## Via de Cristo Renewal Group

Via de Cristo is a renewal group that starts with a weekend retreat. Last year Amber Meyer, Alice Gill, Mary Rosenboom, Elecia Pitman and Betty Finden attended. For 2008, the weekends are April 3-6, July 31-Aug 2, and November 6-9. We have our small Via de Cristo Renewal Group meetings at Christ The Servant on Thursdays 6:30 p.m., which are open to anyone who has ever attended a Via de Cristo Weekend. There are other gatherings throughout the year with fellowship, fun, worship and communion at other churches. Any questions about Via de Cristo are welcome; just ask Lilly Gholston, Marilyn and Roger Larsen, or Dean Dahlin.

—*Lilly Gholston, for Via de Cristo*

## Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA at CTS Lutheran had a powerful first year. During 2007 we had the following successful service projects. For the clothing drive, we donated three cars full of clothing to a Denton County Friends of the Family. Bake Your Thanks was a huge success; we baked over 60 dozen cookies and delivered them to local fire, police, and military officers, thanking them for serving us. The Lutheran World Relief Soap Drive was also a huge success. We have several bars of soap to send to Lutheran World Relief. Our goal is to do one local and one international service project each quarter.

The WELCA participants have also had a lot of fun this past year. We have visited museums, and enjoyed arts and crafts classes, Bible study, dinners and parties. The 2008 calendar will be published soon for the WELCA events. We invite all women of Christ The Servant Lutheran to participate, including those teens who have completed confirmation.

—*Amber Meyer, President, Women of the ELCA*

## Writers' Group

The Writers Group began meeting in the fall of 2006. Led by Betty Finden, it now consists of members Joan Rennie, Raelene Gibbons, Mary Jennings and Alvin Roeder. Eighteen “Sharing Faith” stories by members of Christ The Servant Lutheran and ten “Introducing Members” articles have now been published in our monthly newsletter *The Servant's Voice* and the bulletin. Furthermore, we organized and compiled the Lenten Meditations Booklet, a Lenten devotional booklet with devotions written by members of the congregation. We thank all who have participated and look forward to publishing even more wonderful submissions from members of our congregation.

*Betty Finden, Coordinator, Writers' Group*

## Youth Ministry

During the last quarter of 2007 we have been busy redesigning Youth Ministry at Christ The Servant Lutheran Church. Amber Meyer and Elecia Pitman are co-coordinators of Youth Ministry. We have held three events so far: two planning lock-ins and a youth-led worship service. The Youth Ministry Team is in the finishing stages of the 2008 calendar and will be publishing it soon. Thank you to parents who help plan and support youth events. We look forward to a successful year ahead with plenty of activities, service, worship and fellowship.

—*Amber Meyer, Co-Coordinator, Youth Ministry*

# Community Service and Social Ministries

## Briarwood Retreat Center

Briarwood Retreat Center is the outdoor retreat and camping center of the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod, the synod to which our congregation belongs. We are fortunate to have this facility located less than 20 miles from our door step. The Retreat Center, set on over 70 acres of wooded land, provides an ideal setting for summer camp programs. Summer camps are open for youth who have completed Grade 2 through Grade 12 and for college students, as well. Special retreats are offered throughout the year for elementary youth, Confirmation students, parents and caregivers, and senior citizens. A Briarwood Retreat Center area has been designated on the Activities Center bulletin board where you can find information on upcoming activities and events. The Briarwood website is [www.briarwoodretreat.org](http://www.briarwoodretreat.org).

—Henry Howe, *Briarwood Communications Coordinator*

## Empty Bowls Project—8th Annual

The Empty Bowls Project once again gave members of Christ The Servant Lutheran and the Denton community the opportunity to show their care and commitment to those less fortunate at the 8th Annual Empty Bowls Project on October 26, 2007. The recipients of our efforts were Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and Denton Community Food Room. Thrivent Care in Communities continued their support with matching funds, which was included in the total distributions.

Here are some highlights of the year: We held 19 Tuesday-night bowl-making classes, beginning May 1 and ending October 15, with an average attendance of 12 from CTS Lutheran and the Denton community. We enjoyed increased community involvement, and many nights had 20 people working together. Carin Horn and David Cox generously donated their time and talents to keep the Tuesday nights going. Major bowl contributors were Golden Triangle Woodturners, Carin & Robert Horn, David Cox, TWU, UNT and other local potters. Lilly Gholston & Nancy Bleumel headed the Silent Auction. The event weekend took 243 volunteer hours and was held at Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen. The total volunteer number of hours for the project this year was 1294. Ravelin Baking Company donated 40 loaves of bread. Denton Record Chronicle, Denton Connection, and Denton Regional Medical Center provided media and advertising for this year's event. Liz, chef at Our Daily Bread, donated her time and soup for our event. Jill Waite involved Denton ISD students and was in charge of bowl donations with a total number of bowls greater than 650.

Many hands make light work is an adage that applies to our commitment to use our time and talents to help those less fortunate.

—God's peace and joy, *Lois Plato, Empty Bowls Coordinator*

## Hope, Inc.

Hope, Inc., is a non-profit agency, established twenty two years ago, that has worked in Denton County to assist those homeless and potentially homeless families who have the ability and desire to help themselves and so move to establishing and maintaining self-reliance.

Hope, Inc., provides five services:

- Emergency Housing Assistance with budget planning and rent or mortgage assistance for up to 30 days;
- 30-90 Day Assistance with financial and support services for families with dependent children;
- Transitional Housing for 12-24 months for families meeting the federal definition of “homeless;” and
- Housing Counseling, which involves financial and life skills planning for persons facing homelessness or displacement due to eviction or foreclosure.

During 2007, Christ The Servant Lutheran supported Hope, Inc., fundraising with the purchase of 15 poinsettias during Advent, by participating in Celebrity Waiter Night on December 4, and with financial contributions. Rudy Menn currently serves on the Hope, Inc., Board of Directors.

*—Rudy Menn, Board of Directors, Hope, Inc.*

## Interfaith Ministries—Apple Tree Back-to-School Project

Interfaith Ministries of Denton assisted 779 low-income children in Denton ISD with Apple Tree Kits, each containing two sets of clothing, a pair of shoes, and basic school supplies, on August 11, Distribution Day for the Apple Tree Project of Interfaith Ministries. The grand total of assistance from the church and the community provided an average of \$141 dollars assistance per child. According to Denton ISD, 38% of its Fall 2007 students are economically disadvantaged. This translates to about 7,500 students. Next year, the need will be even greater. Thanks to all members of Christ The Servant Lutheran for your support of this very needy program to help these children.

*Vern and Nettie Zehms, Co-Coordinator, the Apple Tree Project*

## Lutheran Campus Ministry Meals

I recently took over as Lutheran Campus Ministry Meals Coordinator for Christ The Servant Lutheran. John Plato filled this role for a number of years, and as you know, he is a tough act to follow.

Your support for the Campus Ministry Meals program warms my heart. The time, energy, and love you all put into these meals, is an expression of your love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and a fulfilling of Christ’s direction to be servants of all mankind.

The college students you serve are learning how to be professionals in this world that we live in, and your efforts in preparing these meals are real examples of how to be good Christians.

It has been said many times: the way to a persons heart is through their stomach. And may I add: if it is also a pass-way to their soul, God bless you for your efforts.

—*Yours in Christ, Michael Minard, Lutheran Campus Ministry Meals Coordinator*

## Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project

During 2007, CTS Lutheran ordered products distributed by the Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project, a fair trade initiative. These items were purchased for congregational consumption and for resale. We enjoyed coffee, cocoa, tea, chocolate bars, almonds, pecans and dried cranberries. Paper, biodegradable coffee cups from LWR are now used in an effort to be more ecologically responsible. Through the LWR Coffee Project, we enjoy all of these products while helping small-scale farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia as they build a better future for themselves and their families.

—*CJ Solberg, LWR Coffee Project Coordinator*

## Quilters' for Lutheran World Relief

The quilters have lost two of our very faithful, longtime members this past year. Eleanor Hoffpauier died in March 2007, and Thelma Stewart died February 2008. We miss them very much. Several hundred dollars were given in memorials to the quilters so we were able to purchase several new sewing machines, plus thread, scissors, and other sewing supplies. This has been a tremendous help as we were spending a lot of our time trying to "fix" our old sewing machines.

Shipping dates for the quilts are the Thursday and Friday following Easter each year. We sent 158 quilts to Lutheran World Relief last year, plus giving several to Denton County Friends of the Family and a few to others where needed. This year our total number of completed quilts will be about the same.

We quilt the second and fourth Monday and Tuesday of each month. Average attendance is eight ladies. Our goal for the coming year is to get more ladies involved; we have a lot of fabric waiting to be stitched and sent to where it is badly needed.

—*Yvonne Poppe, Quilter for Lutheran World Relief*

## Servant's Garden

Started in the fall of 2004, the Servant's Garden has just completed its third full year in 2007. The mission of the Servant's Garden is to be good stewards of our resources and use the fresh vegetables from the garden to feed the needy and hungry.

This past year we delivered 795 lbs. of fresh produce to Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen. Since the beginning of the Servant's Garden we have delivered over 2500 lbs. to Our Daily Bread. The Servant's Garden incorporates organic and sustainable gardening practices. No toxic chemicals are used for pest control and no synthetic fertilizers are used.

Planting for the 2008 growing season has started. As of the March 1, 2008, there are onions, potatoes, mustard greens, and turnips planted. We also have 200LF of black berries planted, with the first harvest scheduled for Spring 2008.

If you are interested in working in the garden, please call Monty Naylor, (940) 898-8506, or e-mail me, montynay@aol.com.

—*Monty Naylor, Coordinator of the Servant's Garden*

## Financial Stewardship Ministries

### Memorials Committee

The Memorials Committee is comprised of Carolyn Kacena, Chair; Lisa De Los Santos; and Rudy Menn. While 2006 was a year of transition to new procedures in tracking and thanking folks for contributions to the Memorial Fund, 2007 was a year, unfortunately, of testing these procedures considerably. Sixty-eight individuals received one or more thank you notes throughout the year as losses were felt by ten families. Each of the ten families received one or more lists of contributors to add their own personal acknowledgements to the donors. We hope this represents the totality of gifts to the fund in 2007, and we welcome constructive comments regarding the procedure.

Contributions during 2007 were designated to the quilters, to landscaping, and to sanctuary renovation. The quilters used monies to purchase three new sewing machines built to withstand heavy use, and monies were expended from designated and undesignated memorials to purchase an additional 20 hymnals for the sanctuary.

The Memorial Fund is an available avenue for contributions in memory of individuals who pass away or have in the past been lost to your family circle; we also receive gifts on occasion to honor a graduation, a wedding, a baptism or some other happy occasion worthy of remembrance. We meet as needs arise but on an infrequent basis. Chairs of various ministries who identify a need for congregational use may recommend those needs to the 2008 Committee directly or through the Congregational Council. Expenditures are approved upon Committee recommendation by the Council.

—*Carolyn Kacena, Chair, Memorials Committee*

### Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Our annual "Never-Meant-to-Be-Annual" Thrivent Garage Sale was held on September 15. It was a great success. Thrivent matched our revenues with our Care in Congregations allotment. The receipts are to be spent for our congregation. We have had a crew of faithful people who have given of their time and energy to raise this money and we want to say a big, "Thank you" to them.

In 2008 Thrivent will again match our Care in Congregations maximum allotment when we have a fund-raiser that makes at least that much money. Once again, we will need congregational participation in this event.

—*John Rosenboom, Thrivent Congregational Coordinator*

## Thrivent “Never-Meant-to-Be-Annual” Garage Sale

The “Never-Meant-to-Be-Annual” Thrivent Garage Sale and Youth Bake Sale was held on September 15. The generous outpouring of garage sale and baked goods donations, along with many hours of dedicated hard work by almost 30 garage sale and youth group volunteers, made the sale a huge success. The garage sale team donated a total of 482 hours and collected record donations, together with matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. The youth group earned money, selling baked goods, hot dogs and drinks.

*Vern and Nettie Zehms, Co-Coordinators, Thrivent Garage Sale*

## 2008 Congregational Council

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