

CROSS AND CROWN LUTHERAN CHURCH
CROSS AND CROWNICAL

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*The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in the land of deep darkness
On them the light has shined.*



We begin a new year. For some there is freshness, for others foreboding danger. For some the upcoming road looks clear and straight; for others, a cliff lies ahead. We are a mixed people, and it is always that way—lives intertwined around the Cross.

In my position, I am privileged to hear some of the private hurts and joys of those who are members and friends of Cross and Crown. I've sat with those whose lives have been irreparably changed in this past year. I've listened to some of you as you've shared pain, uncertainty and loss. It is one of the most important ministry functions for a pastor.

With many of these conversations there has been an element that often surprises me and I don't know why. I've done this work for over 31 years and the same element in the conversations comes through—hope for the future.

In the midst of the darkness, people speak of hope, a future when things will be better. Whether it is finding a new place to live, rebuilding a life after foreclosure, divorce, or job loss, people speak of hope.

I see hope in the scripture from Isaiah as that *great light*. It is the *great light* of God's presence for all who suffer. It is the great light of God's direction in the midst of uncertainty.

One other thing I've seen this past year that has been amazing and encouraging to me as your pastor is the spirit of generosity that you have shared. I've seen it in people who come by and bring food to others; folks who behind the scenes stop by and give of their time, energy and presence to the weakest among us; financial gifts, and gifts of encouragement that keep this ministry moving forward; people going out of their way to bring joy and care to others.

Generosity is a response to the *deep darkness*. It is a response that signals hope to others. It is a sign of God's graciousness coming through us. Generosity is *grace in action* no matter what form it takes and I've seen it again and again within "*the land of deep darkness*."

The most effective faith practice we can do while we are in the midst of the *land of deep darkness*, is to practice a spirit of generosity. By doing so, we bring God's *light* to shine on those we encounter.

After all, it was God's generosity to birth Christ for the world. Christ became *grace in action* for us. I look forward to seeing the many actions of grace that will come through Cross and Crown this year as we live in God's light and love.

See you in church,

Pastor Newt

Youth News

Welcome to 2009!

January has arrived and it's time for New Year's resolutions. As gyms increase membership sales and Nike jogging shoes go flying off the racks, Americans nationwide make commitments for the upcoming year. January 1st is a day where people commit to some sort of change and dedicate themselves to following through with whatever resolution they make. Change isn't always fun and often times it's not very easy. In this last year we have seen gas prices fluctuate dramatically. During 2008 I purchased gas for \$4.79/gallon, and then a couple of months later filled up my car for \$1.65/gallon. One change left me upset and discouraged while the other gave me hope and some extra cash in my wallet.



No matter what the change may be, whether we consider it positive or negative, we as followers of Christ can be confident that the God we serve is constant and that he is ultimately in control. As we approach a time where we have new leadership in our country, it is important to remember that God is the ultimate power and that we live in a place that God himself created. No matter what mood we're in, no matter who our president is, and no matter how much gas costs, God is the same loving father each and every day. In Colossians 1 it says *"¹⁶For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."* We as Christians can rest assured that no matter how stable or unstable things may seem, our God is there to remind us that He is our father who is the true redeemer.

His word promises that in him all things hold together, so as we change our calendars and move forward into 2009 we can be confident that whatever tomorrow brings, the one who created each and every one of us and has never ending love for us is in control. Better him than us! As we roll into the New Year the youth group will be studying different aspects of who God is and who Jesus was as a man. We will look at the fundamental aspects of God's character and how that influences our lives today. I hope 2009 is full of joy and blessings for you and your loved ones. Have a great January and God bless.

Sincerely,
Andrew Haraldson, Youth Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

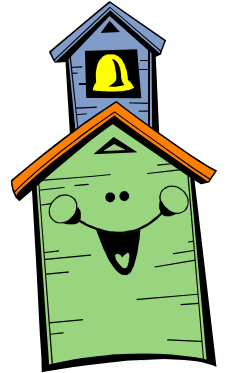
Jan. 14, 21, 28- High School Youth Group

The high school group meets every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the youth loft. Y.G. is a great place to connect with God and each other. It's a place where we hang out, play games, worship, and grow in our individual relationships with God. There will be no youth group Wednesday Jan. 7. All high school age students are welcome and we hope to see you there!

(Continued on next page)

Cross and Crown School News

With the new year comes learning in new areas of God's world. We begin by teaching the children the story of Epiphany, the coming of the Wise Men. It is at this time giving to the Christ Child begins to make some kind of sense to a young learner. Until now young children think in terms of "me and what do I get out of this". The story of the Wise Men opens their minds up to the possibilities of sharing and expressing love through their gifts.



In conjunction with studying the story of the Wise Men and the star of Bethlehem, the First Graders and Kindergartners will begin a month long unit on astronomy. We will learn the names and how to find several constellations in the night sky. Our unit culminates in February when we go on a field trip to visit the SRJC Planetarium.

The preschool, through stories, art projects and songs will be experiencing the season of winter this month. Maybe God will thrill us with a dusting of the hills in a blanket of snow to make this unit come alive!

With the coming of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, all classes will be learning about the acceptance of diversity. The preschoolers may not understand this concept as we do, but when presented with treating each other with kindness, sharing, taking turns and loving each other as God loves us, it becomes a fundamental message of preschool and Christianity alike. First grade and Kindergartners will take this one step further and begin to understand how history relates to the events, people and places of that time. We will view the film "Ruby Bridges" which will help us make that connection.

We welcome you to stroll down the hallway outside the preschool rooms and view our artwork throughout this month of January. You will be delightfully surprised.

Jean
School Administrator

Youth News, continued

Winter Retreat

We will be having a weekend retreat either the first or third weekend of February. We will have a guest speaker and we're hoping to go to Tahoe or a local retreat center. During this month we as a youth group will be deciding when and where we want to go, and asking for volunteers to drive if necessary. If you are in high school and interested in going, please contact Andrew with what weekend works best. If you are over 25 years old and would be interested in driving and/or chaperoning for the weekend, you can leave a message for Andrew by calling the church. It's important to get all the details nailed down as soon as possible so we can reserve whatever weekend we want for next month.

Mexico Deposit:

If you're planning to attend the annual Mexico Mission Trip, a \$50.00 deposit is due by Jan. 13th. If you're not sure if you want to go and you have questions, feel free to contact Andrew or Bernadetta and we'll be happy to sit down with you and let you know what to expect!

January Opportunities



The Resurrection Ringers Are Born!

Have you missed the sound
of the bells in our services?

Would you like to participate in a bell choir? The **Resurrection Ringers** will begin rehearsals on **Thursday, January 8 at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. If you have ever wondered if you could ring, come to the first rehearsal and find out how much fun it is to do. If you have questions, contact Jean Bashi at the school (795-7863, ext. 32). We'll see you on the 8th!



**SESSION TWO
BEGINS JANUARY 14
SOUP SUPPER AT 6:00 P.M.
CLASS BEGINS 6:40 P.M.**

**Bible Study
Confirmation Class for Youth
High School Youth Group**

**COME JOIN US FOR FOOD, FELLOWSHIP
AND FAITH BUILDING**

RECLAIMING the "L" WORD...

...is the book and topic for the **Adult Forum beginning January 11**. Come join us for an eight week discussion at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the conference room off the Welcome Center. The book looks at renewing the church from its Lutheran core. **Books are available in the church office for \$13**. You might remember that the pastors did a sermon series on this topic about 4 years ago. We hope you will consider joining us. Myrna is the discussion leader.



WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB JANUARY EVENTS

BOOK EXCHANGE PARTY

Wednesday, January 7

7:00 p.m.

at the home of Joan

JANUARY BOOK CLUB MEETING

The Book Club selection for January is "The Fencing Master" by Arturo Perez-Reverte. Spain's best selling novelist writes about an aging and solitary fencing master in Madrid, Spain, eking out a threadbare living in 1868, when he is visited by a beautiful woman, who offers him double his usual teaching fee. Naydean will host on Tuesday, January 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Welcome Center. All women are invited to come and join the lively conversation.



ANNUAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting has been set for **Sunday, January 25, 2009**. Bring a finger food to share at **4:30 p.m. in the Welcome Center**. The meeting will convene at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

A copy of the annual report will be available on Sunday, January 18, so you can review the information prior to the meeting.

If you are a leader whose work needs to be written in the Annual Report, and you haven't sent the report yet, you're late. Please submit it as soon as possible, as it takes the office staff a while to compile all the information. Thank you.

January Opportunities

NOAH AND US

(Neighbors Organized Against Hunger)

It is again, during the month of January, our turn to help put food on the table for those who are in need in our community. On a weekly basis, NOAH is feeding approximately 250 families in Rohnert Park and Cotati, who are in real need this time of year.

There are several ways that you can help. On Tuesday, there is "shopping" to do at the Redwood Empire Food Bank. On Wednesday, there are strong people needed to help unload the truck at the Fire Hall on Southwest Boulevard at approximately 12:30 p.m. From 2:00 to 4:00, the food must be sorted into bags and made ready for the people who will come to receive them, and from 4:00 to 6:00 the food will be distributed. After that is a short period of clean-up, and we go with a warm feeling (or maybe cold, in January) of having met a need and provided for those in our community who can't always provide for themselves. If you are unable, either physically or because of scheduling, to participate with the actual distribution, your check or a gift of canned goods is always welcomed. Checks can be made to NOAH and placed either in the offering plate or brought to the church office.

Sign-up sheets are available in the Welcome Center, if you can participate. Thanks for your continued support of this important ministry.

Contact Dick if you have further questions.

PIANO FOR SALE

Sarah Lyons, daughter of Mary Schultz, has closed out Mary's apartment at Merrill Gardens, and she needs to sell Mary's piano, an Everett Spinnet, quickly. If you or anyone you know would like to have a piano, please contact Sarah at (925) 422-1345 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (this is her work number).

HERE WE GO...

In 2009, Pastor Newt is going to do something different during the sermon time. Together, we're going to create a "theological dictionary," which will be the basis for the sermons in 2009.

Beginning with the first Sunday in January, Pastor Newt will structure the services around words you have phoned, e-mailed, or put on the back of Communion cards that you would like to have as the basis of a sermon. By the end of the year, we'll have a "theological dictionary" based on the words that you have submitted.

We won't go alphabetically through the year and there may be some letters that will have a couple of important words for us to look at. Over the year, I expect we will still hear plenty of the words of Jesus, some helpful words of the Apostles, and cover some important events from the Old Testament, just like we do each year. Except we'll use a different lens to look at our faith life.

It isn't too late to submit your word (or words). Who can come up with the first good word for Q, X or Z?

If You Missed This Year's Christmas Dinner...

...you missed a great event! The dinner, prepared by Nikki and her helpers from the Fellowship Committee, was excellent, and our annual musical presentation of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" far exceeded our wildest imaginings, with emphasis on "wildest." You might even get to see part of it on video sometime during the Christmas season.

The winners of the quilt and basket of baby goodies were drawn at the event. Congratulations to Brenda, mother of Doug, who won the quilt, and Kirsten who won the baby basket. The proceeds of the quilt raffle will benefit several of the charities supported by our Quilters, and the proceeds from the baby goody basket will benefit the school.

COMING IN FEBRUARY AND BEYOND...

YOU ARE INVITED to come play **BUNCO**

It's easy and lots of fun for the whole family,
and the refreshments are great!

Friday, January 9
7:00 p.m.
in the Welcome Center.



THE PRAYER PARTNER LUNCHEON IS EARLY THIS YEAR

The Prayer Partner luncheon will be held this year on **Saturday, February 14th**. If you are interested in helping, we will have our first meeting on Saturday, January 10th at 10:00 a.m. in the Welcome Center.

February's Prayer Partner Luncheon will include a "Revelation." Who were this year's Prayer Partners? And we will pick new Prayer Partners for 2009! Don't miss the fun and fellowship we enjoy every year at the Annual Prayer Partner Luncheon.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS MORE FEBRUARY EVENTS

February 22—Mexico Dinner and Auction
to benefit the Mexico Mission Trip

February 25—Ash Wednesday
Ash Wednesday Service is at 7:00 p.m.

March 21—CCLS Toy Sale
To benefit the pre-school.

**Details of all these events will
follow in the February newsletter.**

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY NEW SESSION SCHEDULED

A new round of *Financial Peace University* classes will begin in February. This is a 13-week course, with classes to be held on **Saturdays from 10-12, February 21 through May 23** (skipping the Saturday just before Easter) in the Art Room.

A brief video introduction to the course will be held between the **9:15 and 10:45 services on February 1 and February 8**, in the Art Room.

The course is taught on video by Dave Ramsey, a well-known author and lecturer in the area of personal finance. Many people think of Ramsey as only a "get-out-of-debt" guy, and certainly that is an important component of the course. However, the course covers a wide range of topics, all designed to help us live in *Financial Peace*.

Each class consists of a one-hour video lesson, followed by an hour of class discussion. The classes are fun and entertaining, but this is also serious business—so yes, there *is* homework! The course is open to the public, so don't hesitate to tell your friends outside of Cross and Crown who might be interested in improving their level of financial peace!

The cost for course materials is \$100, and includes the textbook, a hard-bound workbook, CD's of all the class sessions, and various other goodies, as well as access to the internet budgeting tools and community forums on the Dave Ramsey website for the duration of the class. For further information, contact Tandy.

WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR A COMMUNITY GARDEN COORDINATOR

Teri will be unable to continue as community garden coordinator after December 31. If you have a passion for gardening, full information about the position is in the December newsletter. Contact Teri if you'd like more information or would be interested in this volunteer position.

ETC.

Superstition or Faith

Where does your power come from?



or



Friday the 13th of March
to
Sunday the 15th of March,
2009

Walker Creek Ranch

Registration cost Dec. 7-Jan. 25
\$230

Brochures are available on the table
in the Welcome Center.

GARRISON KEILLOR IS COMING

**Sacramento Memorial Auditorium
September 22, 2009
7:00 p.m.**

This is a fundraiser for the 125th anniversary of Lutheran Social Services of Northern California. They would like to fill the 13,000 seat auditorium and are looking for people with a passion for LSS to promote ticket sales in our church. Priority seating is available until February 1, and group tickets are available. If you would be willing to serve as coordinator for this event, or if you would like to go to the event, contact Barb in the church office.

(If you don't recognize the name, think "Prairie Home Companion." He also has a regular radio show on NPR. He is *so* funny, and *so* Lutheran.)

The Year

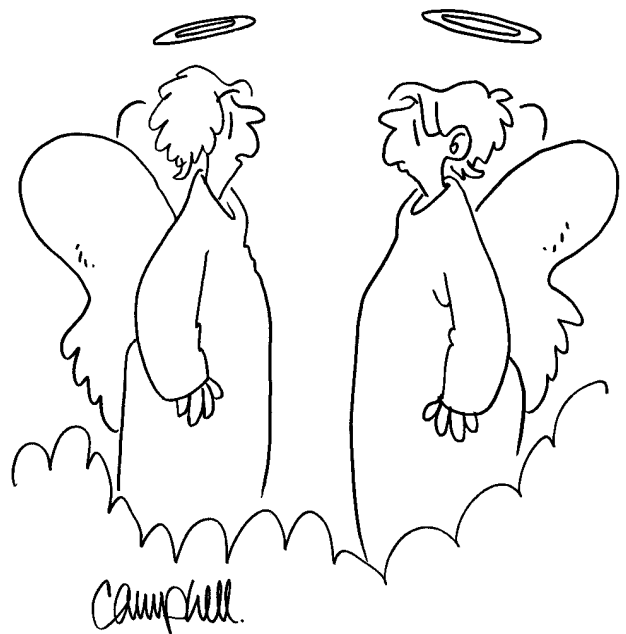
The Year is closed, the record made,
The last deed done, the last word said,
The memory alone remains
Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains.
And now with purpose full and clear,
We turn to meet another year.

-Robert Browning

***Congratulations** to Jennifer, who has been hired as director of the chancel choir. Jennifer is the choir director at Petaluma High School, is managing director for the Sonoma County Choral Society, and has served as interim choir director at Cross and Crown. Welcome, Jennifer, and we look forward to having you on staff.*

The 2009 Flower Calendar has lots of empty spots

It is located on the bulletin board outside the church office. Now is the time to reserve your "special" place on the calendar for 2009. The cost of the flowers is \$25.00, and you will be reminded when it is your turn to provide them. You are welcome to take home the flowers after the third service, or donate them for distribution to our homebound and hospitalized members.



"I shouldn't be surprised. I was in the check-out line."

OUR STEWARDSHIP

NOW WE MUST LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS

† ***CHERISH***

† ***CHALLENGE***

† ***CHOOSE***

As you will see from the report below, we are far below in our giving from our 2008 projections. This has been a difficult year for many of us. Jobs have disappeared, housing has been downsized or has disappeared, prices have gone up. It is a tense time in which we live, and it is reflected in our projected giving for the year. Fortunately, we believe in a God who will meet our needs...not necessarily one who grants every wish, but our needs will be met. From this point of faith, we begin our new church year. If you haven't yet made a pledge of your finances or your time and service, it is never too late. Please respond as quickly and as generously as you can.

Totals to this point are:

Packets sent out	206		
Packets Returned Last Year	108	Packets returned, to date	96
Total Pledged Last Year	\$386,208	Total Pledged, to date	\$343,608

IRA ROLLOVER EXTENDED THROUGH 2009!

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 has been extended. The IRA rollover gift is a simple and easy way to provide a gift to Cross and Crown while not increasing your taxable income.

- ✓ You must be 70-1/2 or older at time of transfer.
- ✓ For gifts up to \$100,000 from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009
- ✓ Transfer of funds must come directly from an IRA or Roth IRA to the charity
- ✓ Gift must be an outright charitable gift (you cannot transfer funds to donor advised funds, a private foundation, gift annuity or trust)
- ✓ This gift will count towards your minimum IRA distribution, but will not be counted as income, and therefore will not be taxed. This is true even if this gift exceeds the maximum permissible level of taxable giving for the year.

This information is not intended as legal or financial advice. Please contact an attorney or financial advisor for further consultation.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A JOB?

The 2010 Census is hiring. Go to <http://www.census.gov/2010censusjobs/index.php> for more information, or just call 1-866-861-2010, find out your local census hiring office phone number and follow the instructions when you call.

The Census office will call you back and schedule a test for you. The pay range is from \$11.50 to as much as \$20 per hour and jobs are P/T, flexible, and temporary. There are 4 or 5 days of training in your community and you are paid for them!

Pass the word. They need hundreds of thousands of employees! Good luck!

Other job opportunities are posted on the bulletin board at the end of the "old" hallway. If you are looking, check out that board, as well.

Kids Page

WWJD key chain



This craft is a reminder of Jesus' perfect example for us. When we ask "What Would Jesus Do?" we can build our character to be more like his.

What you need:

- 16 inches of bead and jewelry cord (about 1 mm thick)
- 32 mm split ring (key ring)
- 4 wooden beads (about 1 cm or 3/8")
- 5 jewelry beads (plastic or wooden, about 1/2 cm or 1/2")
- black permanent marker

What you do:

1. Fold your jewelry cord in half.
2. Put the loop of the jewelry cord through the split ring.
3. Put the ends of the cord through the loop to make a knot.
4. Thread the two ends through one of your small beads.
5. Then thread the rest of the beads (alternating between small and large, ending with a small bead).
6. Tie two or three knots at the end to hold the beads in place.
7. With a permanent marker, write a letter (W, W, J and D) on each of the four wooden beads. On the opposite side of each bead, write the same letter.

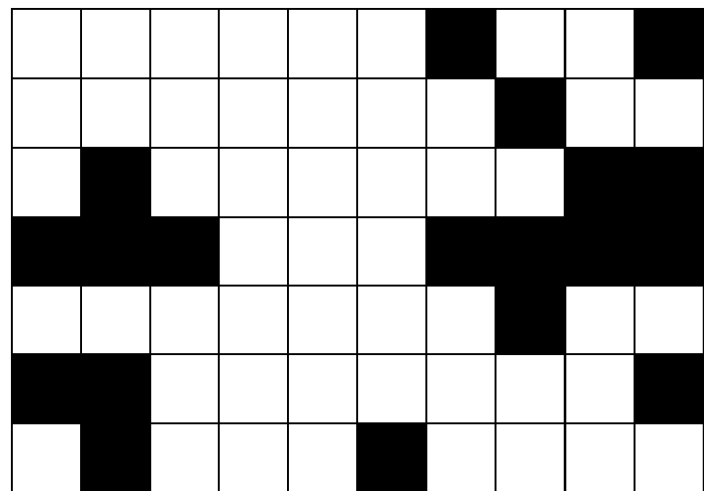


CHARACTER THAT PLEASES

The New Year is a time for renewed commitments and changes in our behavior. Complete the puzzle below to see whose example is worthy of imitating or copying.

Match the blocks of spaces and letters to finish the NIV Bible verse.

Y		M	L	L	O	W	F	O
A	S	E	A	M	P	L	E	X
		O	F	O	L	L	I	
O	F	E	A	T	H	E		
.		S	C	H	R	I	E	X
:	1	1	1	C	O	R		1



Answer: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1