

2011 PASTORS' ANNUAL REPORT BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Caught in grace, created for service, called into community.

As we begin the new year together on the eve of the 50th Anniversary of this congregation, we are overwhelmed by the gracious spirit of this community. Bethlehem understands the invitation of welcome, the compassion of service and the joy of the Gospel. It has been a wonderful year together and we are thankful for the important ministry that we share. Here are a few highlights from this last year:

- Dot's Garden: The creation and dedication of a children's garden given in celebration of Dot Anderson's life in order for our preschool and Sunday School children to grow in awareness and care for God's creation.
- 2nd Annual "Bethlehem Serves": Growing to almost 200 people working on 15 projects, this annual day of service begins with prayer and ends with changed lives all over the community of Encinitas.
- Follow the Star: The first of our 50th anniversary celebrations. The Family Center became a stable again, as we journeyed back to Bethlehem with Roman soldiers, a bustling market, and live animals—all ending with a living nativity and very cute baby Jesus!
- Increased ministry: An increase in time of the Assistant Pastor and further support of the Youth Ministry and the restoration of several other ministries, funded by the Ministry Challenge Fund and this congregation's extraordinary support.
- With our deepest gratitude: We say thank you to Carol Sanders for 14 years of faithful and exemplary service as the financial secretary for Bethlehem Lutheran. Her gifts and her tireless commitment have been our blessing. We wish her God's richest blessings in her retirement.
- Music, music, music: From the many instrumental and vocal expressions of faith-filled music, we have not only been blessed in worship, but this past month, our Global Music Team was honored to lead worship for all the bishops of the ELCA.
- Children, children, children: Growing numbers of children and youth were involved in this year's Sunday School and Vacation Bible School program, Confirmation and High School ministries.
- Service, service, service: TACO, Interfaith Shelter Network, Community Resource Center, Pajama Project, Giving Tree, Scraps and Prayers, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Center For Global Awareness, water projects, Bethlehem Serves ... and so much more.
- Adult education: With topics like books of the Bible, Science & Religion, the Roman Empire, and Islam and the modern world what will we learn next?
- Community involvement: The first community wide Blessing of the Animals in partnership with the Rancho Coastal Humane Society, the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, shared meals with Muslim communities, an Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service and Peace Vigil.
- Add your ministry here...

As we think about this coming year, we are equally excited by the opportunities ahead of us. Not only are we celebrating 50 years of faith-filled ministry with a multitude of events and cherished people, we are moving into the next 50 years with plans for expanding both our physical space on the church campus as well as reaching out into our community. These plans include the building of a “Learning Village” that will create needed space for the preschool, children’s, youth and adult education—as well as space for working in partnership with other services in the community. Stay tuned for these plans (and many more) as they unfold.

We are so grateful to be part of a community of grace, compassion and joy that lives Christ’s command to love and care for the neighbor. It is a privilege and blessing to serve among you as your pastors. Thank you all for the gifts of your faith and joy as Bethlehem continues to praise God and serve in Christ’s name.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Laura Ziehl
Pastor Daren Erisman