



## Pastor's Column

### Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter. It's a slogan but it is also a movement. The movement emerged in 2012 after George Zimmerman was acquitted of killing Trayvon Martin. More recently the movement broadened into a conversation about the many ways in which black people are left powerless and deprived of basic human rights and dignity. The *Black Lives Matter* movement affirms the full dignity and humanity of the lives of black queer and trans folks, black disabled folks, black undocumented folks, black folks with records, black women and all black lives along the gender spectrum.

Black Lives Matter. Not just for black people, but for the whole world. So do brown lives, and young lives, and old lives, and gay lives, and straight lives. We all need each other because no single group, no single culture, no single religion has all the answers. Each individual and each group has a unique perspective and life experience, and only by putting all of them together can we see the whole.

The Epiphany story illustrates this very beautifully. Epiphany, by the way, refers to our ability to see God at work in the world. And while we can have an Epiphany all on our own, we often need each other in order to fully comprehend.

The Epiphany story tells it this way: A group of astrologers in the East was able to discern that something tremendous had happened. With their

long tradition of studying the stars, they could tell that a new king had been born. But they did not know who this new king was, or where exactly he was born, or why his birth mattered. Meanwhile, a thousand miles further West, there was a group of Hebrew priests and scholars with a long tradition of waiting and praying for a king from the lineage of David. Their scriptures told them where this king would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. And they knew why his birth mattered—he was the Messiah, God's way to bring peace to the world. But they did not know when his birth would take place. So each group had a piece of the puzzle—the Eastern astrologers knew the timing, the Western scholars knew the location. Together they were able to find their way to the Messiah.

How about you? What own unique life experiences have you had, and what have they taught you? How can you offer up your experiences as a contribution to the ongoing work of healing and liberation in the world? Where might you have gaps? Where might you benefit from the wisdom, culture and unique experience of others? What insights might you gain from hearing the stories of others? What pieces would you like to add to your puzzle?

You are a child of God, beautifully and wonderfully made. You have something important to offer to the world. Your life matters!

Happy Epiphany!

*Pastor Bea Chun*

## LGBTQ Lutherans celebrate 25 amazing and faithful years:

25 years ago two San Francisco congregations – St. Francis Lutheran Church and First United Lutheran Church– extended calls to openly gay and lesbian pastors, in violation of ELCA policy. These actions led first to an expulsion of both congregations from the ELCA, and then through faithful work and tireless advocacy they led to a change in policy within the ELCA. Finally, the ELCA affirmed the full inclusion of all LGBTQ people in all aspects of ministry. An invitation was extended to both congregations to return to the ELCA. Each congregation chose to prayerfully reflect on this

invitation. A service of reconciliation and healing began the work of healing, and on February 27, 2011 St. Francis became once again a member of the ELCA. First United followed a year later.

The following letter (opposite page) was sent to us by Pastors Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their ordination. We salute them on this anniversary for their courage and give thanks for their leadership.

*Pr. Bea*



January 18, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We join with you in celebrating the anniversary of three extraordinary ordinations twenty-five years ago. On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1990, we three-- Jeff Johnson, Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart-- stood together within the wide embrace of a circle of blessing. During that unforgettable service we heard choirs singing in our ears, drums pounding in our hearts, and felt fire anoint our heads. We saw clouds of incense rise as prayers to heaven in the great Gothic church of St. Paulus Lutheran. The heavenly charged current of love was extended to us and pressed upon us through the hands of hundreds of congregants celebrating the work of the Spirit doing a new thing in the wider Church.

We three were the ordinary recipients of an extraordinary blessing, a blessing that would call us into adventures unknown by paths untrodden. Throughout the years, we would be strengthened by the legacy of those who had gone before us and graced by the support of those who accompanied us every step of the way.

Now in 2015, as we commemorate the past, we also celebrate the present and the unceasing energy of the Spirit who continues to do new things inside and outside of the Church and who continues to shower extraordinary blessings upon ordinary people. It would seem that those who respond to God's call are forever transformed and become instruments of transformation. But one thing is clear: no one does anything alone and no one does anything without struggle. God's plans always transcend the individual's and always require the support of visionary communities that choose to live into the possibilities of tomorrow as if they were already the realities of today. In so doing, the Spirit effects change-- at first so incremental as to go unnoticed, but with faithful perseverance, suddenly becomes the crack through which light comes in and barriers tumble down.

We celebrate today a church which has extended its hand in welcome, a church that is learning to value loving relationships irrespective of gender preference or sexual orientation, and a church that has recognized the gifts of those previously deemed unsuitable for ordination. Simultaneously, we rejoice in the legal recognition of marriage, both within congregational life and outside in the courts.

Clearly, our work is not yet done. There are many others on the margins of church and society whose dreams remain deferred and whose hopes hang by a thread. Those of us who have seen our hopes realized must work shoulder to shoulder with those whose hopes remain unrealized. But for today, let us rejoice and be glad, for behold, the Spirit has indeed done a new thing. Thanks be to God!

With hearts full of gratitude,

Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart

# Christmas Gala

Photos courtesy of Chris Buchanan

December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> was a busy time for the St. Francis Gala Committee. That was weekend of the Gala on Saturday night, and the Senior Center Bazaar the next day.

Of course there was a lot of preparation by the committee prior to that weekend. Without their hard work, it would not have been the success it was.

Many people came out to support both the Gala and the Bazaar. The combined net proceeds was approx. \$8,800.00. This income also included a grant from Thrivent Financial of \$1,200.00.

Thanks to the committee: Chris Buchanan, Greg Egertson, Beverly Hines, Paul Johnson, Tom Tragardh and Randy Thueme, Iris Vaughan, Sarah Wells.





# Children's Christmas Service

Photos courtesy of Sarah Wells



St. Francis is a  
Reconciling in Christ  
Congregation  
where all are welcome.

## Christmas Angels

The word angel comes from the Greek “aggelos” which means *messenger*.

One famous message delivered by angels is “Peace on Earth Good Will Toward Men.”

At St. Francis our Angels have delivered goodwill to men, women and children at Friends of St. Francis Childcare Center. This Christmas season the congregation and the St. Vincent DePaul group gifted a selection of 15 families with generous gift certificates for groceries and specially chosen gifts for specific children.

This year, Pastor Bea suggested that we have a team wrap gifts. Thanks to Kirsten, Nancy Ewart, Leona Lee, and Iris Vaughn for creating beautiful packages for the children. We had the fun of Santa

her/him self seeing the soccer balls, adorable baby clothes, magic light design boxes, pretty little umbrellas, toy cars and planes, games, and clever wooden dolls with magnetic changeable clothes and much more. Every gift bag contained a couple of candy canes too. In addition, some of the moms were given gift certificates to Target for that extra something.

GOODWILL IN DEED! Parents have expressed their gratitude and I expect some

letters will be posted soon. In thanks for creating community, staff at the center have expressed their gratitude for the support received from the congregation of St. Francis Lutheran Church. We are not alone. Angels surround us.

*Nancy Record*



### Friends of St. Francis *Childcare Center*

#### Contact Us

Pastor Bea Chun

[Pastorchun@sflcsf.org](mailto:Pastorchun@sflcsf.org)

Dave Walda

Senior Parish Administrator

[dave.walda@sflcsf.org](mailto:dave.walda@sflcsf.org)

Dr. David Schofield

Music Director

[david.schofield@sflcsf.org](mailto:david.schofield@sflcsf.org)

Beverly Hines

Senior Program Director

[beverly.hines@sflcsf.org](mailto:beverly.hines@sflcsf.org)

152 Church Street (at Market)  
San Francisco, CA 94114-1111

Phone: 415.621.2635

E-mail: [stfrancis@sflcsf.org](mailto:stfrancis@sflcsf.org)

We're on the web!

[sflcsf.org](http://sflcsf.org)



*A Reconciling In Christ Congregation,  
where all are welcome*



**ASH**  
Wednesday  
Services

February 18

1 PM

7 PM



**ST. FRANCIS LUTHERAN CHURCH**

152 Church Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114-1111



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America