

Pastor's Newsletter – December 11, 2009

Dear Saint!

This is the second Sabbath of the Advent season. The weekend is full of special events, so we want to make sure you are aware of all if it.

TONIGHT: *The Joyous Sounds of Christmas* will be presented by Orangewood Academy in our church, tonight, December 11, at 7:15 pm. It will include the Academy Choir, the Handbells of Orangewood, and the Middle School Choir, with our own Amanda Johnston as guest soloist. We have special refreshments planned, surround-sound Christmas music everywhere, and a terrific way to spend the beginning of a Christmas Sabbath!

SABBATH MORNING:

YOUNG ADULTS / YOUTH: We have been averaging over 20 young adults every week. 9:30 am is almost a full breakfast, the Praise Band starts up at 9:45 am, they break for Study at about 10:05 am, with the high school Youth going over to the Library for a discussion for their own peer group.

YOUTH CHURCH: 10:50 am, in the Youth Chapel

DIVINE WORSHIP: We were specially blessed to have Dr. Bill Chunestudy and the Men's Chorus here last week, but this week will be just as much a highlight Sabbath. We have the Vietnamese group bringing a special number right at 10:50 am, then our new praise team will lead the Songs of Gathering. Cheris Jensen is our highlight special music this Sabbath, we are thrilled to have her back. My first baptism at Garden Grove, Damien Philips, will be baptized into our church, and we are just thrilled for him. The sermon is on the 2nd and 3rd phrases of Luke 2:10-12 "Be not afraid, for we bring GOOD NEWS of GREAT JOY!" "JOY—FOR YOU AND ME!" based on an old arrangement of "Joy to the World" that some of you will be old enough to remember!

VIETNAMESE BANQUET: All are invited to a major evangelistic event in the Fellowship Hall, 6:30 pm, where our Vietnamese group have invited all of their fellow Vietnamese and guests from the community to a banquet and music. I will have the homily/message.

PATHFINDERS: Our newly-configured club starts at 6:30 pm Saturday night. Meet at the Pathfinder Room and follow the directions they will give there, as the Adventurers are also there at 6:30 pm. The focus is on the STAR honor tomorrow night! But mostly it will be a Christmas party! Adventurers are to bring with them a shoebox or other container for the craft, a small, inexpensive gift appropriate for a boy or girl for the gift exchange, and a dessert or side dish for the party (the club will be supplying pizza and drinks).

SABBATH, DEC. 19: There will be a dramatic interpretation of the Christmas story, with actors in costume filling the platform to give us the story in hi-def 3D! We're pulling out all the stops, the Hallelujah Chorus, everything! The sermon is on the 4th phrase: "TODAY A SAVIOR IS BORN TO YOU."

SABBATH, DEC. 26: INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS SABBATH! The day after Christmas, we will celebrate the diversity in our church, which is a taste of heaven! We want to have a grand processional featuring the flags of every single country represented in our church. The flags are \$30, including the poles—if you want to donate and make sure that your flag comes marching in, not just this week but for years to come, fill out one of the slips tomorrow and turn in your pledge. Everybody who can will be dressed in their native costume and the potluck in the Fellowship Hill will feature the best "comfort food" from every country! The sermon will be on the last phrase of our passage: "FOR ALL THE PEOPLE!" We think our diversity is a blessing from God, and our lives are all richer for it.

MORE PATHFINDERS AND ADVENTURERS: Sabbath morning is the last day to sign up for tickets to the ballet fundraiser. The Nutcracker performance is on December 19 at 7:00 pm and December 20 at

2:00 pm. Ticket prices are \$17 for adults and \$15 for children ages 10 and under. Although you can still attend the Nutcracker and purchase your tickets at the door, I will not be able to reserve your tickets after tomorrow morning. 50% of the tickets from Garden Grove members are being given to our clubs by the Ballet organization, a pretty special gift. Find Sandra or Alex Caldwell to reserve a ticket.

There will also be a field trip to the Griffith Park Observatory on Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 pm. Christmas caroling will take place on December 23 at 6:00 pm.

ORANGEWOOD SECULAR CONCERT: The secular version of OA's Christmas season will be at the school auditorium, Thursday, December 17, 7:00 pm.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE: The traditional format is being revised for next Friday night in favor of a special ministry off campus. More details coming.

CHURCH BUDGET: We had a terrific offering Sabbath, \$4700 for the church budget. We need a total of \$34,000 this month to break even for the year. That leaves us with \$29,300 to go. EXCEPT that we have \$3000 rent coming in for December, which makes it \$26,300. EXCEPT that another renter owes \$2700. Which makes it \$23,6000 to go. By God's grace we can do this! The Church needs an average of 3% of income from everybody—obviously some cannot do that, so others of us have to stretch out a little more. Listen to the whispers of the Spirit, give what you can, and watch God fill it up so you can give it again for some project to the glory of God.

PRAYER: Say a special prayer for Helen Sneed, who had eye surgery yesterday.

God bless you all, see you tonight and tomorrow!

Pastor Dan