

# THE CURRENT WORD

## LAKE NOKOMIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2009



### ***LIGHT HAS INVADED THE DARKNESS...***

#### ***Readings from the Christmas Eve Service***

When I was a small child, during the war, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place.

I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece. This one. And by scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light in to dark places where the sun would never shine - in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find.

I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game. As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light...is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it.

I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know.

Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world - into the black places in the hearts of me - and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of life.

Robert Fulgham,

*It was on Fire when I Lay Down On It*

*"Light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it,"  
proclaims the ancient word;  
light stands firm against the dark  
landscape of reality,  
warmth prances in rooms too long drafty.  
Each of us holding a flickering candle;  
seemingly insignificant one by one, yet  
magnificent when held together.  
Each of us making a choice to stand in the  
light;  
proclaiming the indisputable presence of  
unquenchable light.  
Light shines in the darkness and the  
darkness cannot overcome it.*

Katherine Hawker,

*Liturgy Outside the Box*

### **Congregational Meeting:**

**Sunday, January 18, immediately following the worship service, the annual congregational meeting will be held – in conjunction with a pot-luck lunch – in the Library.** Annual reports of Session teams and congregational groups, as well as the Treasurer's Report of 2008 and the budget for 2009, will be discussed. Three members will join the Session as Class of 2011: Barb Day, Bill Fischer, and Gary Johnson. Kathryn Sathre and Alan Isaacson will join the Deacons Class of 2011. There remains one open spot for the Deacons. Leaders will be 'retreating' following the meeting at the Arc Retreat Center in Cambridge.

### ***LNPC SERVES AT SIMPSON***



Continuing a long-standing commitment, LNPC has scheduled four meal services through 2009 at the Simpson Shelters.

We will serve three times at the Women's Shelter: *April 26, June 28, and November 29.*

We will serve once at the Men's Shelter, *September 27.*  
[Note: each is the last Sunday of the month]

Please set aside those dates, especially the September date when we will serve up to 100 men, to help provide and/or serve the meals.

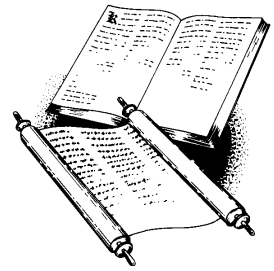
Within their mission to "house, support, and advocate" for those experiencing homelessness, Simpson offers a continuum of services: emergency housing, transitional housing, and permanent rental housing – and the education and support to make long-term independent housing successful.

*"Every night in our men's and our women's shelters, Simpson offers a bed, a warm meal, a hot shower, and the dignity of being addressed by name to 60 people experiencing homelessness. In the past 12 months shelter advocates have placed over 100 people into permanent housing."*

## EDUCATION ON SUNDAYS

### **Lectionary, a definition:**

A Lectionary is “a collection of readings or selections from the Scriptures, arranged and intended for proclamation during the worship of the people of God. Lectionaries were known and used in the fourth century, where major churches arranged the Scripture readings according to a schedule which follows the calendar of the church's year. This practice of assigning particular readings to each Sunday and festival has continued through the history of the Christian Church....The Consultation on Common Texts emerged from ecumenical meetings held in the mid 1960s. It was formed by Catholic and Protestant liturgical scholars in response to the reforms in the liturgy mandated by the Second Vatican Council, especially in the area of English texts for the liturgy and then in the dissemination of the 1969 Roman Lectionary (Ordo Lectionum Missae).” [from Consultation on Common Texts website: [www.commontexts.org](http://www.commontexts.org)]



The ‘Lectionary Cycle for Sundays and Festivals’ is a three-year cycle, each week assigned texts from the Testaments, Psalms, and Gospels. While the cycles do not cover every verse in every book, they give a broad chronological perspective of the Biblical text within the framework of the church year (from the ordinary time preceding Advent through Pentecost), and a common point of reference for people studying together, across geographical or denominational lines. You can find a link to the lectionary on the church website: [www.lakenokomispc.org/readings](http://www.lakenokomispc.org/readings).

The Children’s Sunday School curriculum follows the lectionary, as does most of the preaching during worship. The **Adult Sunday School class will begin a Bible Study, following the Sunday Lectionary**, in January. From 9 – 10 a.m. Sunday mornings, we will be looking at the current week’s passages. It could be that our conversation opens our hearts to more clearly hear the words of the following service of Worship. Readings are:

January 4: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9) 10-18

January 11: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29:1-11; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

January 18: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

January 25: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

*Looking ahead in Adult Education:*

**February 1, 8, and 15** - Adult Education will look at the life and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer - pastor and martyr and one of the great Reformed Theologians of our just-past (or any) century. Dr. Andrew Root (Andy!) will lead the education hour, and Pastor Kara will preach a sermon series based in Bonhoeffer's theology.

**March 1 and 8**, Rev. Dr. Theresa Latini, friend of the church and preacher at Kara's installation service, will be leading Adult Education, exploring the Book of Confessions. She will be preaching on March 8.

***An opportunity for service:*** Like kids – especially the little ones? Spend an hour with our Sunday School class! No need to prepare – the teacher does that – we just need loving arms to shepherd busy bodies. If you can help – once, twice, or regularly – let the office know, or talk with a Deacon. Special blessings to all who help!

***NEWS FROM THE WIDER CHURCH...***

**“To church or not to church”** – PC(USA) researcher studies the ‘spiritual but not religious’

[what does this say to LNPC, as we seek to find a place in our neighborhood, and have our neighbors find a place in our church?]

*From the Presbyterian News Service,  
Jerry L. Van Marter*

One of the first and most frequent statements Americans hear when conversation turns to religion is “I’m spiritual but not religious.”

Growing alienation of young people from organized churches and the general

decline in church membership in the country have many denominations

scrambling to find new ways to reach out to the unchurched.

The Rev. Linda Mercadante, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister who teaches theology at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, has moved beyond speculation and conducted



extensive research on what people mean when they say “I’m spiritual but not religious.”...

...Referring to “SBNRs,” Mercadante freely admitted she was once one of them. “I was definitely one of those people,” she said. “I’m a baby-boomer — I tried yoga, Transcendental Meditation, all that stuff. My mother was Catholic and my father was Jewish so I had no real religious training growing up. I went through it all — Catholicism, atheism ... and finally found the PC(USA).”

Everybody knows someone who professes to be SBNR, Mercadante said, and so she has traveled around the country — Colorado, New York, Ohio, California, even to Canada — conducting 90-minute interviews with anyone who will talk to her.

The response has been overwhelming. “I spent two months in Boulder (CO) and there were so many volunteers I didn’t have time for them all,” she said. “There’s not just a spiritual hunger out there, but a hunger to talk about it.”

So why aren’t these spiritual but not religious people in the church?

One of the common assumptions — that many spiritual but not religious people had bad experiences in the church — is simply not true, she said. “I was surprised, but there was very minimal reporting by people that they had been hurt in or by the church.”

In fact, Mercadante said, spiritual but not religious people “start in many different places but they all seem to have arrived at close to the same place.”

That place, she continued, is marked by “stereotypical arguments against organized religion and the claims of churches.” They include:

- \* churches claim to “exclusive truthfulness — that they have a corner on the truth market”;
- \* churches demand that personal beliefs be abdicated;
- \* churches demand conformity to a “corporate mentality”;
- \* joining a church means a loss of personal integrity;
- \* churches demand commitment “to things that have no meaning”
- \* churches demand commitment to disagreeable codes of conduct; and
- \* churches profess arbitrary or implausible beliefs.

“I heard the same arguments over and over again,” Mercadante said of her research. “I don’t know where this script comes from — no one knows any real churches that fit this profile or stereotype.”

Another flawed assumption, Mercadante said, is that young people leave the church, typically after high school if not before, but then return to the church after they get married and have kids.

“By and large, it doesn’t happen,” she said.

Another religious researcher, Robert Wuthnow, has conducted research into sociological trends that impact church membership and participation in organized religion. Those trends include:

- \* delayed marriage (Americans are marrying at a later age, on average) and increased divorce rates;

- \* fewer children born later in their parents life;

- \* less job security, therefore greater financial insecurity, making commitment less likely;

- \* higher levels of education, which decreases “unquestioned belief”;

- \* “loosening relationships,” resulting in less community involvement;

- \* Globalization, producing less homogeneity and greater diversity; and

- \* the “information explosion,” which creates “broader spiritual horizons and therefore looser religious identification.”

“I think it’s clear that much of the problem organized religion faces today is not really the church’s fault,” Mercadente said. “We are experiencing a massive cultural shift that is extremely hard to keep up with and the church always lags behind these shifts — too slowly, obviously, for some people.”

But the church, as it has in all ages, has the spiritual resources to meet the hunger that is always present, Mercadante concluded. **“Our challenge is to bring all the church has to offer into this milieu and break the stereotypes that keep people away.”**



We are attempting to streamline our announcements on Sunday mornings by putting most of them in the bulletin. If you have an announcement that you know of in advance, please email it to Rev. Kara or Jan in the office:

[jan@lakenokomispc.org](mailto:jan@lakenokomispc.org)

or call and let us know by  
Thursdays

REMEMBER ~ we’ve re-started a regular food collection Sunday – the last Sunday of each month (1/25, 2/22). Bring money or non-perishable food to church and it will be delivered to Simpson Food Shelf.

Kara Root - Pastor and Moderator of Session

**2009 Session**

Class of 2009: Sue Hensel  
Diane Hansen  
Dick Gross

Class of 2010: Aleta Isaacson  
Jane Kutz  
Norm Petrik

Class of 2011: Gary Johnson  
Bill Fischer  
Barb Day

Presbytery Commissioners -  
Bill Fischer, Barb Day  
Alternate: Sue Goodspeed

Dennis Johnson – Clerk  
Butch Goodspeed - Treasurer

**Staff:**

Jan Johnson – *secretary*  
Andrew Crow – *choir coach\**  
Andrew Tessman – *organist*  
Rodney Seek (Best Way) – *custodian\**  
\*(contract position)  
Editor - Sue Goodspeed

**Committees of Session:** Administration, Worship, Membership, Education, Personnel.  
If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, interests or *anything* you'd just like to share, please talk with a Session member!

**Board of Deacons:** The Deacons function as a unit, sharing responsibility for visitation and ministries of presence with those in transition. Members are: Marge Bantle, John Bixby, Sue Goodspeed, JoAnne Hansen, Pat Niznick, Alan Isaacson, Eva Webb, and Kathryn Sathre, (also Parish Nurse Associate).

**REVISION STATEMENT - LNPC**  
(as approved following the Revision process, October, 2007)

**LNPC seeks to**

- become a beacon of hope and a place of sanctuary
- reach out to the needs of neighbors, sharing our selves and our resources.

**Prayer Network**

We have been called to communicate with God through prayer. God encourages us to pray for one another and has promised to answer. To enable us to pray effectively for one another and for our church, the LNPC Prayer Network has been organized. Call Pat Erickson, coordinator (612-925-4418) with prayer requests.