

A Strange Way To Save The World
by 4Him

I'm sure he must have been surprised
at where this road had taken him,
'cause never in a million lives
would he have dreamed of Bethlehem.
And standing at the manger
he saw with his own eyes
the message from the angel
come to life, and Joseph said,

“Why me, I'm just a simple man of trade?
Why Him, with all the rulers of the world?
Why here, inside this stable filled with hay?
Why her, she's just an ordinary girl?
Now I'm not one to second guess
what angels have to say,
but this is such a strange way to save the world.”

To think of how it could have been
if Jesus had come as He deserved:
there would have been no Bethlehem
no lowly shepherds at His birth.
But Joseph knew the reason
love had to reach so far,
and as he held the Savior in his arms,
he must have thought,

“Why me, I'm just a simple man of trade?
Why Him, with all the rulers of the world?
Why here, inside this stable filled with hay?
Why her, she's just an ordinary girl?
Now I'm not one to second guess
what angels have to say,
but this is such a strange way to save the world.

Now I'm not one to second guess
what angels have to say,
but this is such a strange way,
a strange way,
this is such a strange way
to save the world.

.....
Dear Faith Family, blessed Advent greetings to you. As I prepare again for the coming of our Lord and Savior to return to Earth in all of his glory and majesty, I grieve at the events at our church and

Michael's resignation. This is Joy, that I can celebrate my faith and hope in the midst of our sorrow. *I pray that you experience this Joy now and every day until the Lord returns.*

I'm finding that the Lord is giving me strength and knowledge and power daily while I cry and am angry. He is increasing as I am decreasing. He allows me to get angry, but not to sin in my anger. He grieves with me when I cry, but doesn't allow me to justify sinful words or actions. His Spirit prays when I'm crushed and have no words. He listens when I do have words, any words, all words. I thank, I confess, I petition, I yell, I whisper. He whispers back, "I love you, too, Stacey." *I pray you hear God whispering your name as you continually talk to Him and seek His guidance in all things.*

When I've grieved in the past I've felt isolated and alone, lies the devil used to my detriment. I've had my share of grief: seven years of infertility before Alannah and three miscarriages after her, many moves and the loss of family in close proximity and contact with friends. The grief I am experiencing with the loss of Michael resigning as our pastor is by far the most difficult I've felt. However, I do not feel isolated as I have in the past. The Lord is closer to me during these days and months than ever before. I see His hand in the smallest details of my life. I see His sovereignty in the largest details in my life. He is with me, and the devil cannot use his bleak and common lies this time. I believe this is due to God speaking to me through my intense Bible study, both with the Ladies Bible Study Group and in private. In moments when I'm struggling with forgiveness, I read His words about it in the Lord's Prayer. In moments when I'm struggling with a response to a conflict, I learn that "every conflict impacts God's reputation" and I'm convicted to not say the words on the tip of my tongue or complete the action I feel justified in doing. *I pray your Bible study time is fruitful with the gifts of the Spirit.*

The Lord is shaping my spirit and teaching me about faithfulness and forgiveness in new ways. He's asked me to be silent in moments when I have wanted vindication. He's asked me to forgive when I have wanted retaliation. He's asked me to stay close to Him when I've wanted isolation. He's asked me to leave a legacy at Lutheran Church of the Cross: When you think of me, Stacey Jewell Stahl, today and in years to come, He wants you to think, "She was sad and angry, but she did not sin in her words or actions." *I pray this is my legacy. I pray that if I have sinned against you that you know I accept responsibility for my actions, and I'm very sorry. I pray that if I have not sinned against you in these months of grief, that you know it was God, and not me.*

I will continue to pray for us as we grow in faith and knowledge of our Lord and Savior even though we are no longer worshipping together. You have a special place in my heart, and I will never forget the Joy we shared. *I pray we are able to joyfully forgive each other as He has forgiven us.*

He must increase; we must decrease. To Him be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Marantha,

Stacey Jewell Stahl

LCC HAPPENINGS

Hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving. Now we are in the midst of Advent, as we prepare for the coming of Christ. May everyone experience the joy that the Christmas season promises.

- **Many thanks** to Kyle McGivney, Jackie Johnson and all who helped with Mainspring on November 14th. Once more we fed 100 people!
- **The women's Bible Study** group completed their study of "*Having a Mary Spirit*" by Joanna Weaver.
- **A HUGE Thank You** to **Sandy Sweetser** for coordinating our fall fundraiser, *The Country Cupboard*. Many in the congregation participated by baking goodies or by making crafts for sale. The Honey-Baked Ham Company also helped out by selling gift certificates for their hams, the church receiving 50% of the gross sales! We made over \$650.00 through both these efforts, which we hope to have matched by Thrivent.
- **The New Bethlehem Coffee House** started up on November 15th. This program for mentally challenged adults, is once again being coordinated by **Jill Chiarelli**!
- **Thanksgiving Eve** –Christ Lutheran Church in Scituate hosted the Thanksgiving Eve service.
- **The Hanover Ecumenical Thanksgiving service** was held Monday evening, November 23rd, 7:30 PM at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.
- **Annual Congregational Budget Meetings** – The church council held several congregational meetings during the month of November to review and vote on the budget for 2010. These meetings addressed a tough topic since there were serious financial issues to discuss. The budget proposed by council on November 8th, referred to as the 2010 transitional budget, recommended moving to "guest pastors" in 2010. This recommendation was then voted on in 2 subsequent congregational meetings, on November 15th and November 22nd. The 2010 transitional budget was approved, the result of the vote shown later in this newsletter.

DECEMBER AND BEYOND

The DSS Family to Family program is in full swing. Dana and Kyle McGivney have taken over this program and have coordinated with the Department of Social Services, getting the Christmas wish lists for more than a dozen children. As of last Sunday, November 29th, all but 5 gifts had been spoken for. Wrapped presents are due back to the church by Sunday, December 13th.

The New Bethlehem Coffee House will host its Christmas program on December 20th, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM. Maria Moyer will be providing the entertainment, playing Christmas Carols for a sing-along. Jill can always use more help, so keep the date open and come help out!

Mainspring for December is being coordinated by Kyle McGivney and Walter Seamon on December 12th. The signup and menu is posted on the bulletin board.

Advent Services – This year there will be **NO** Wednesday evening advent services.

Christmas Eve – We are only having one Christmas Eve service this year, at 7:00 PM.

The 2010 flower chart will be up shortly. Please watch the bulletin board and sign-up for flowers for next year.

Scrip Program – The date to order gift cards for Christmas through our Scrip program is **Sunday, December 6th**. The church receives a percentage of all scrip cards sold, so this is such an easy way to Christmas shop for loved ones, and contribute to our church family at the same time!

Volunteer Opportunities

The strength of our church has always been largely due to the commitment of our members. It is important that we all continue to help and volunteer. There are many ways each of us can choose to help. Below are just a few...

Hanover Habitat for Humanity – The Hanover Habitat for Humanity just started work on the house being built in Hanover. The project is on hold due to budget issues, but should be starting up soon. The plan is to have each church in Hanover donate Saturday lunches on a rotating basis. Kyle McGivney is in charge of this. Please see Kyle if you would like to help with lunch every 6th week once work gets started.

Remember the Hanover Food Pantry. Christmas is coming and the Hanover Food Pantry can use as many donations as possible! All things are needed; paper products, soaps, pasta, juices, snacks – you name it! **Please help out!!!** Many thanks to all who continue to make contributions.

Mainspring – We supply meals to Mainspring on the 2nd Saturday of each month. A menu is usually posted around the first of the month and we can always use a few more cooks and bakers. We have been feeding 100 people the last few months! The monthly schedule for 2010 is on the bulletin board. Kyle McGivney has been doing the lion's share of the work, so it would be great to find a few more people to help him coordinate the meals in 2010! Many thanks to Maiju and Ron Balas who have jumped right in and signed up for January.

Coffee Hours – This year we need people to supplement the confirmation families in hosting the weekly coffee hour after church. A sign-up is on the bulletin board for volunteers to help out! We can still use a few more volunteers this year, so thanks in advance for all your help!!

Worship assistants – We can always use more worship assistants. People to help with counting, Altar Guild and communion assistants would be more than welcome! We are working on an instruction session for those interested in Altar Guild, and for counters as well if need be. Please call Kathy in the office, 781-826-5121, if you would be willing to help with one of these groups.

New Bethlehem Coffee House – Please come help Jill Chiarelli on the December 20th, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM!

Personal Mention

- **Happy Birthday wishes in December** are extended to **Lea Bouchard, Haley Dwyer, Becky Hayes, Cheryl Koertje, Dan Prestridge, Melinda Rhoads, Jared Staples, Sandy Sweetser, Robin Willis and Craig Yeingst!**
- **Happy Anniversary to Pastor Jim and Judy Stoltenberg!**
- **We welcomed into the Lord's Family** through Holy Baptism, **Brett William Orrall**, son of **Lisa and Bill Orrall**.
- **Congratulations to David Jonathan Bakeberg and Melissa Ann Poland** who were married on November 7, 2009!
- Our thoughts and prayers are with several families on the death of loved ones.
 - The Abbott family** on the death of Bill Abbott
 - The Fontaine family** on the death of Stephen Fontaine
 - The Michael Smith family** on the death of Mike's mother, Carol Smith
- **Congratulations to Heidi Olson, Federico Morales and big brother Soren** on the birth of **Jensen Nicholas Morales** on December 1st. (and to grandparents Claire and George Olson). Jensen showed up a week early, weighing 8 lb. 3 oz.

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PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...



- The Abbott and Sidney families** on the death of Bill Abbott
- The Fontaine family** on the death of Stephen Fontaine
- The Smith family** on the death of Carol Smith, Michael's mother
- Marie Bain**, for good health
- Ed Beck**, for continued sobriety and related health
- Chris Donahoe**, recovering from a blood clot
- Ethan Darcy**, for continued healing related to his congenital heart defect
- Carla Errichiello-Hill**, for continued health and healing
- Rob Hendrickson**, for continued health and healing
- Joyce Linde**, for health and healing
- Bella, Brayden and Brett Orrall**, for health and growth.
- Bill Williamson**, for health and healing
- Harriet Williamson**, recovering from a broken hip
- Audrey Yeingst**, undergoing treatment for cancer of the liver and bile duct
- Vickie Beck**, dealing with serious health issues
- Eva Churchill**, the Hendricksons' friend, for healing from multiple health issues
- Harrison Collett**, brother of one of our Nursery School students, diagnosed with bone cancer
- Anna Fitzgerald**, Agnes Abrahamson's granddaughter, dealing with epilepsy and autism
- Jodi Gries**, Jerry and Barbara Gorichs' daughter, recovering from cancer surgery
- Jerry Haley**, friend of the Sweetzers, diagnosed with a brain tumor
- Erik Johnson**, 6 yr. old cousin of Stacey Stahl, diagnosed with non-hodgkins lymphoma

Lloyd Prestridge, Dan Prestridge's father, living with cancer

Pastor Riss, undergoing surgery in December

Jill Sidney, for healing, after losing a leg in a car accident

Ministry to the Persecuted Church:

Two Ethiopian Christians who were sentenced to prison in July on false charges of paying people to convert to Christianity were released on Oct. 23. Temesgen Alemayehu's and Tigist Welde Amanuel's six-month prison sentences had been reduced to fines of 500 birr (approximately US \$37) several weeks earlier. Before being freed, they were accused by fellow inmates of insulting the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and were sent back to detention, where Alemayehu was denied medical treatment. A judge later rejected the new charges against them. Praise God for their release, and pray for their protection.

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Ballot Results

LCC Congregational Vote, 11/15 & 22

2010 "Transitional" Budget

73 FOR Acceptance (passed)

- Transition to Guest Pastors, 1/3/2010
- Pastor Stahl's Last Sunday, 12/27/2009

3 AGAINST Acceptance

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To Think About ...

Author Tim Hansel has 4 tips for contentment. (He actually calls them "commandments.") These have direct application for the holidays:

1. **Live here and now.** The holiday season is about anticipation and looking forward, but don't forget to also make the most of every moment with your family. Look for the miracles right in front of you!
2. **Don't hurry.** The tragedy of the Christmas/holiday rush is that we neglect things – and usually people – that are far more important. Slowing down helps us to live in the here and now. We're more likely to notice and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells that make this season so wonderful.
3. **Don't take yourself too seriously.** The person who takes himself too seriously ends up being a pretentious, defensive person who works five times harder than necessary to try and prove himself. Meanwhile, he forgets to laugh – especially at himself. Laughing at yourself can be a great strength, especially for fathers and mothers– and it can really help things go more smoothly this time of year.
4. **Be grateful.** The Thanksgiving holiday should live on. Gratitude is at the heart of peace and contentment, and can radically alter how you experience the Christmas/holiday season.



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From the Consecrated Stewards Team:

“God offered His best for us; let us offer our best to Him.”

“And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus...” is the way Luke’s account of the Christmas story begins in chapter two (KJV). That decree caused Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem, the city of David, where Jesus was born according to ancient prophecy. God’s timing is perfect as He carries out His will. Galatians 4:4-5 reads, **“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”** (NIV)

God’s promises are true and find their “amen” in Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament God inspired His prophets to write down many promises of a Savior. The faithful people of God

believed His promises and were saved by that faith even though they had not seen the Savior with their own eyes. They lived before Christmas and we live after Christmas. We also have not seen Jesus with our own eyes and yet, by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, we believe that on that first Christmas Christ took on Himself our human form, kept the law perfectly for us, preached the good news of salvation, performed countless miracles and then offered Himself up as the precious Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, ours included!

Christmas is a very joyous occasion as we celebrate our Lord's first coming into the world but we also know that the shadow of the cross already hovered over the manger where the baby Jesus was laid. He was born to die in our place so that the door to heaven will be open to us and all who believe in Him as our only true Lord and Savior.

As Christian stewards we live in the light of the Gospel and freely and joyfully manage all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. God offered up His best for us and in response we strive to offer our best to Him. During this joyful Christmas season we have many opportunities to show our love for God by showing love to all the neighbors He has placed around us, especially those who have special needs of body, soul and spirit. May God help us to use our gifts of time, talents, skills and financial resources to His glory and the welfare of those around us. May He especially help us to be like the shepherds and spread the good news of salvation in Christ alone!



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ADOPT AN EXPENSE PROGRAM

(January – December 2009)

Below is the list of "Adopt-An-Expense" program items for 2009, so far. As mentioned at the January congregational meeting, the **goal is to get \$1,600 of adopted expenses by the end of the year. With one month left, we need an additional \$265.00 of adopt-an-expenses to meet our goal!!** Can we do it??? There are still many expenses which can be adopted. Many thanks to Cory and Don Burroughs, Gudrun Davis, Carla and Ernie Hill, Jackie Johnson, Sandy Landstrom, Patty

Owen and the 4th-6th grade Sunday School, and Audrey and Ray Yeingst for their contributions. Please remember that you can adopt a portion of any expense. Every little bit helps!!!

<u>Item</u>	<u>Approx. cost</u>	<u>Remain. Amt</u>	<u>Adopted</u> (this year)
2009 Expenses			
Sunday School Supplies			
Fall material	380.00	140.00	240.00
Winter material	380.00	380.00	
Spring material	380.00	380.00	
VBS Supplies	1000.00	1000.00	
Offering envelopes	500.00	500.00	
Disposable Communion Cups	110.00	0.00	110.00
Portals of Prayer	160.00	160.00	
Confirmation Scarves	40.00	40.00	
Certificates (Baptism, 1 st communion...)	60.00	60.00	
Altar Candles	500.00	500.00	
Eternal Candles	125.00	125.00	
Calendars	30.00	30.00	
Communion cruet	94.00	0.00	94.00
Holy Week bulletin covers	90.00	90.00	
Pastors' wives conference	90.00	0.00	90.00
Financial Secretary expenses	280.40	0.00	280.40
Confirmation Scarves	35.00	35.00	35.00
Confirmation Robes	240.00	175.00	65.00
Confirmation Bibles	165.00	165.00	
Luther's Small Catechism (12)	125.00	125.00	
4 th Grade Bibles	95.00	95.00	
Christmas bulletin covers	30.00	30.00	
Puppet Ministry			
Deluxe Puppet Pack	116.00	0.00	116.00
6 Inbetweens	144.00	39.00	105.00
6 Full/Half Body Puppets	240.00	40.00	200.00
Stage Materials/Props	300.00	300.00	

TOTAL ADOPTED: \$1,335.40

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Thanks to Duane Garman (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-27-1999

LITTLE DID THE SHEPHERDS KNOW WHAT WAS
GOING ON WHILE THEY WERE VISITING BABY
JESUS IN BETHLEHEM
