



Atonement Ministries on the Move!

January 2005

Volume 1, Issue 5

Companion Journey to South Africa

On January 23, twenty people from the Southwestern Minnesota Synod will be heading to South Africa to visit our companion synod, the South Eastern Diocese of South Africa. The participants on this trip include at least one person from each conference in our synod and Bishop Jon Anderson. **Kris Lehman will be representing Atonement and the other Great River Conference churches on this journey.**

The group will travel through Cape Town to Durban and to Umphamulu where our companion synod has its headquarters. There they will divide into ten groups of two and visit the circuits (conferences) or our companion synod.

The purpose of this trip is to deepen and broaden the relationships between the SWMN Synod of the ELCA and the Southeastern Diocese of South Africa. This partnership is now 13 years old. The hope is that we might begin to build conference to conference connections and encourage partnerships between our churches and those of our

companion brothers and sisters in South Africa.

Those participating on the trip will also be learning about the many challenges the South African people are facing, especially the HIV/AIDS epidemic. South Africa has the highest number of HIV infections in the world. More than 5 million (28% of the population) are infected with HIV.

We ask for your prayers and support for those making this Companion Journey to South Africa and for what they hope to accomplish. Each participant is asked to bring two new green hymnals as a gift to one of the churches they will be visiting. If you would like to purchase one of the hymnals or contribute to the cost of Kris' trip, please bring your donation to the office. (Designate on your check that it is for the South Africa trip).

Uhambisano ("walking together") with our South African companions in Christ,

Pastor Jerry and Pastor Rodger

January Highlights

January 9	9:30 am	Baptismal Anniversary
January 10	6:00 pm	ALPHA Dinner
January 16	6:00 pm	Sunday Night Alive! Great Sleepover
January 17		Martin Luther King Day <u>OFFICE CLOSED</u>
January 21-23		Culturing Compassion
January 23	1:00 pm	<i>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i> at Bethlehem with Bishop Anderson and Bishop Kinney
January 26	6:30	Spirit Trek Concert at Bethlehem
January 29 & 30		7th & 8th Grade Retreat at Luthercrest

Women's News

Wednesdays at 9:00 am Quilting

January 4	1:30-6:30	Bloodmobile
January 16	10:30	Bible Study Ldrs
January 25	9:30	Naomi Circle
January 26	9:30	Elizabeth Circle
	1:15	Esther Circle
	7:30	Ruth/Martha Cir.

Bloodmobile....Blood donations to the Central Minnesota American Red Cross have been steady this year compared with the same period last year. The St. Cloud Times reported that this December the north central branch which includes the St. Cloud area will be low by 1,000 units of blood compared with what the organization expected to collect. However, during the December drive at Atonement we collected a record 94 pints. We had a record turnout with many positive comments from donors. Great job! Many thanks to the volunteers that day including Gloria & Wyman Nelson, Candy Pearson, Arlene Omlid (with a little helper) and Bill Garner. The next scheduled Bloodmobile at Atonement is January 4. See you there!.

Ministry Opportunities

Make a Resolution to Support Place of Hope in the New Year.....Thanks to all who supported **Place of Hope** through donations to Paper & Plastic. Let's get 2005 off to a great start with a **PAPER TOWEL ROUNDUP!** Bring as many rolls as you can carry to church on January 16 or drop them off any time during January. Questions? Call Phil Sturlaugson at 259-6451.

The "The Faith in Families" program is a non-denominational family mentoring ministry that recruits a team of volunteers from a faith community. The team is then matched with a family who is struggling to break the bonds of poverty. Through caring and supportive relationships with a mentor team, the family sets goals and works to gain self-sufficiency. The mentors and the family make a one-year commitment to each other. Currently, Atonement has a mentoring team working with a family. The program is seeking additional volunteer mentors for another team. The Faith in Families program staff will host the Coffee Hour on Sunday, January 9, to give out information and answer questions. This faith-based program is funded by the Otto Bremer and Initiative Foundations. The program accepts financial and materials or equipment contributions which are tax-deductible.

Meals on Wheels....Atonement's opportunity to participate in this community ministry is coming up next month... February 21-25 and February 28-March 4. Watch the bulletins for more information.

Inside Atonement

"Jesus' Joy Outlasts the Season"....Discover why at **ALPHA!** Beat the winter blahs and join us for this 10-week experience in New Testament Christianity. Come explore or re-acquaint yourself with the core teachings of the Christian faith, make new friends, and experience God's presence in a personal and powerful way. The course begins January 17 at 6:00 p.m. It starts with a meal (no cooking Monday nights!) and is followed by a talk and small-group discussion. To learn more about **ALPHA**, join us at the Celebration Dinner January 10 at 6:00 p.m. Anyone who has already participated in **ALPHA** is invited to bring a friend. There is no charge, but please RSVP by January 7. For more information or to register for the dinner and/or course, contact Ann at 252-6203 or Nancy at 259-6451.

Experiencing God....The study of "Experiencing God" by Dr. Henry T. Blackaby, will be offered on Sundays beginning January 9 from 9:00-10:30 for ten weeks. Please register by calling the church office at 252-6203 or Barb Bolz at 251-3958 or e-mail Barb at Babsbo@aol.com. We need to know if you are interested so we can order the study book.

Revealing Revelation....The Wednesday evening Bible study group invites you to join them in the study of the Book of Revelation beginning Wednesday, January 5, at 7:00 p.m. for four weeks—January 5, 12, 19 and February 2. Each session is 75 minutes. Pastor Jerry facilitates this study.

Inside Atonement cont.....



THANK YOU!...Under the dedicated leadership of Murray Mack and with the help of dozens of other adults, the children presented the Christmas story in a very meaningful way at the Children's Christmas Program on December 18. Thanks to all, especially the children, for this special Christmas gift.

With Gratitude....With all the Christmas services now behind and the year coming to a close, I would like to extend a special thank you to all who have been a part of the music ministry here at Atonement....

- *The Senior Choir who donates 100+ hours a year to enhance our worship.*
- *The Children's Choirs.. "Kids of the Kingdom", "Children of the Light", and the Youth Handbells who share their joy of singing and ringing.*
- *The Celebration Team who provide us with wonderful services the first Sunday of the month.*
- *The Praise & Worship Team...committed to service and song at 11 am*
- *The Adult Handbells...always a joy to hear.*
- *The Saturday night worship leaders who faithfully service this service.*
- *The string players, Dane Scofield, and Anna Boyle who blessed us with special music during the Christmas services.*

Special thanks to the directors/musicians who make it all possible...Diane Wisniewski-Grzybowski, Kara Rysavy, Greg Lingl, Bobbi Bell, Jullian Euteneuer, and Becca Gardner.

Sincerely, Marcia Handahl, Director of Music Ministries

Prayer Chain.....Did you know Atonement has a prayer chain? What is it? It's a network of Atonement members who receive requests from anyone wishing prayers. Requests come into the church office or to the prayer chain leader. They are immediately passed on through the chain with each member praying immediately. **All prayer requests are kept confidential.** We invite you to call the church office to start a chain reaction of prayer on your behalf. Would you like to become a link in our chain? You may choose to receive calls during either day or evening hours. For more information call Dolly Wiesner at 252-4556.

Youth Update

Spirit Trek....All 65 of our Spirit Trek youth spent the evening of December 15 ringing bells for the Salvation Army in 15 different locations throughout our communities. You would have been amazed at the enthusiasm and creativity they displayed! We had a sax player, two trumpet players, a whole bunch of singers, and a bell choir! These youth are the church of **TODAY!** After a bit of a break, Spirit Trek resumes on Wednesday, January 5. The weekend of January 21-23 the 9th grade students will experience **Culturing Compassion**, an urban servant retreat. The weekend of July 29-30, the 7th & 8th grade students will retreat to Luther Crest. All students will receive a packing list and details of the weekend in the mail. Many thanks to those who have agreed to serve as mentors for our 9th grade students. You will receive a letter outlining the calendar for this ministry and inviting you to training on February 2 at 6:00 pm.



Sunday School....Sunday School will resume on Sunday, January 9. The upcoming rotation will explore the story of Manna in the Wilderness. Parents are always welcome to observe or participate in the rotations with their children—why not visit and see what all the excitement is about?

Book Nook

News...We are having an after-Christmas clearance and used book sale on January 9! Stop in and shop for bargains. A special thank you for helping with



Scrapbooking....will begin on January 27 and continue the last Thursday each month from 6:00-9:00 pm at Atonement. Bring a snack to share!

Atonement Member to Volunteer in Guatemala.....

"My name is Angie Huseth and I am excited to announce that I will be joining the HELPS International Christian Organization to Guatemala in January 2005. This is a response to my completion of 'Purpose Driven Life' last spring. Our travels will take us to Puerto Barrios to provide medical and surgical services to those in need. This is a volunteer effort and I am asking for your prayers as well as a financial contribution if you are able. Any tax-deductible gift would literally mean the 'world' to me! My heartfelt thanks in advance for assisting me in my debut mission."

Please make checks payable to

HELPS

15301 Dallas Parkway, Suite 200

Addison, Texas 75001

Please put my name and trip number (452) on the memo line of your check.

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1144 29th Avenue North
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