



# University Lutheran Church and Campus Center

## *The Lamp Stand*

Serving Greater Gainesville, the University of Florida, and Santa Fe College

January 2014

### Welcome Pastor Graeser!

On Sunday, **February 2**, 2014, University Lutheran Church and Campus Center will welcome Pastor James Graeser, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission, North Region of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA. Pastor Graeser was called to that position as a staff member for newly elected Bishop Robert Schaffer. We look forward to Pastor Graeser's visit and his message that day, as I look forward to sharing in worship leadership with him. Please mark this special day on your calendar; let's have a great crowd that day to welcome Pastor Graeser!

Pastor Collins

### President's view

*"For everything there is a season..."* Ecclesiastes 3:1.

As we come to the end of our calendar year, we might wonder why the last month is December, a name that means "tenth month," when we should be counting the twelfth month. As we look forward, we should count the first month of the year by its number, instead of a month with a name, "January".

The explanation for this anomaly goes back to the time of the Romans when the Julian calendar was being formalized, and December was the tenth month of the year, when the month of July was named for Julius Caesar and August was named in honor of Augustus Caesar—the first month was already named after the Roman god Janus.

Though we do not worship Janus today, in spite of his prominent status of welcoming in the beginnings of the New Year, it might be interesting to consider why he was given this position in the marking of time by the Roman fathers.

Janus was one of the oldest Roman gods who was believed to have ruled over one of the hills of Rome overlooking the Tiber River. He is credited with a rule that brought plenty to his people who were perfectly honest and who lived in peace! Most uniquely, Janus had two faces, one that looked forward and one that looked backwards; perhaps this indicated wisdom by knowing the past and foreseeing the future. Janus also came to be associated with doors that swing both directions, opening in and out.

As we close the old year, a remnant of our pagan heritage reminds us that we should look back and learn from the desert experiences of the past year, but that we should also recall with thanksgiving the many blessings that we have enjoyed both as individuals and as the ULC-CM congregation.

As we welcome the New Year, we can look forward in hope and trust, knowing that as doors open and close before us, according to the season, our risen Lord has promised to be with us “always, to the end of the age.”

Phil Noss

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## **Merci – Thank You – from Haiti**

Christmas kits were provided for 24 boys in Grades 4-6 at Village of Hope.  
Merci – Thank You!

A total of 38 boxes of Christmas cards and note cards were purchased by members of ULC. Merci – Thank You!

Pictures of the students with their Christmas gifts can be seen on the Lazarus Project website. Log on to: [villageofhopehaiti.org](http://villageofhopehaiti.org)

Coming up – renewal and new sponsorships for **2014 beginning in February.**

For additional information contact Janet Janke, Lazarus Project coordinator at University Lutheran Church.

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## *In Memory*



### **Charles Warren Nelson**

April 9, 1929 – December 14, 2013

Longtime ULC member Charles “Chuck” Nelson passed away on December 14, 2013, succumbing to recently diagnosed cancer, at age 84. Chuck had been a faithful and beloved member of ULC for 47 years. He sang in the choir and among other things, served for many years as Church Treasurer, on the Congregational Council, on Audit Committees, as usher, as 'Shepherd' to several "care groups." Chuck even served as lay reader on December 1, 2013, his last time to worship at ULC just two weeks before his death.

Chuck was born in Big Bend, WI and raised in Mukwonago, WI. He earned his BS and MS from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. He moved to Florida in 1966 where he was a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Florida for 29 years, serving as

the Associate Dean of the Mathematics Department when he retired. He received the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Advisor of the Year and Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching awards in 1994 and authored many mathematics textbooks throughout his career.

Chuck and his wife Jane had moved from their long-time home in Gainesville to The Village in recent months. He is survived by Jane, their adult children who knew ULC when they were children and their spouses - Christina (Preston) Robertson, Dana (Mark) Miller, Mark (Cheryl) Nelson, and six grandchildren – Loic (27) and Mattie (19) Robertson; Chase (12) and Lance (12) Miller; Calvin (13) and Elyse (11) Nelson; and nephew Drew Hauck.

A Memorial Service was held at ULC on Friday, December 20, 2013, with a reception following in the Kaiser Center. We miss seeing you in your usual aisle seat at Sunday worship, Chuck, and your gentle and caring friendship.



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Sunday December 1, 2013



Donations from the congregation helped hungry students in Alachua county during their two week winter break when many would not be getting free or reduced meals they normally would while attending school.

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## INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK (IHN)

THEY STAY IN YOUR HEART. A strange thing, but it happens. The families you connect with for a few hours in a single week somehow live with you for a time. At least that's how it is with me. Each guest is different, only similar in their need for temporary shelter offered in area churches through the services of IHN. "It's quite a journey," one woman told me. I never know much of their particular circumstances, but you can sort of read their stories in their faces, including the children – some exuberant, some withdrawn. Some of the parents are using this time to be able to save money from their jobs for housing and some are still seeking jobs. Each family manages to reach into my heart with their situational responses, sometimes easy and grateful, sometimes fearful and quiet. But always, they stay in my prayers for a time.

Five volunteers from ULC hosted at Westminster Presbyterian in November: Janet Janke and Jackie Klein, Joan Anderson and Christy Murgatroyd served as evening hosts; Diane Bruxvoort served as an overnight host. The partnership was so appreciated that the volunteers at Westminster expressed hope that ULC might claim one evening (hosting, dinner, and overnight) during each rotation. The next rotation at Westminster will be the **week of February 9**. Please contact me if you would like to volunteer. --- Joan Anderson

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## Diapers for GCM

The collection method has changed for the infant/toddler diapers for Gainesville Community Ministry. Instead of collecting on the 3rd and 4th Sundays, there will be a bright green container in the Kaiser Center where the diapers can be collected all month long. The container will be labeled "Diaper Donations." All infant/toddler diaper sizes are accepted, but GCM specifically requested larger sizes ( size 5 and above.) Thank you to those of you who have donated diapers already, and those of who would like to donate--you have a whole month to remember to do so! For more information contact Krissi Norford.

# Giving Freely

By Rev. Serena S Sellers,

Pastor of the Peace-Tohickon Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Voluntarily gave ... according to their means

“For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means,...” -2 Corinthians 8:3

“But is that really fair?”

The youth leaders were discussing the upcoming mission trip, and how best to divide the considerable expenses involved. The discussion had revealed a host of complicated factors. There were some families with more than one child in youth group. In one family, unemployment made finances tight, while other youth came from relative affluence. When it came to fund raisers, some of the youth were readily available to help, but others worked on weekends to help support their families or save for college, and others were involved in sports or other extra-curricular activities.

Dividing the expenses evenly seemed reasonable for those who could afford it. Others thought the money should all be raised as a group, with everyone required to participate in the fundraisers. This would allow those whose families were cash strapped to participate. But it was such a large amount of money to raise, that it would discourage participation among the youth who were working or involved in other activities. A compromise position advocated a split between youth group funds, with a detailed accounting of hours worked, and families assuming responsibility for the cost.

Finally someone suggested a radical idea. What if the group let each family know what the over-all cost would be, and asked them to prayerfully consider what they could contribute. Whatever additional funds were needed would be collected through fundraisers and sponsorships. Anyone who couldn't participate in the fundraisers would be asked to seek sponsors for the trip on behalf of the group.

There was some skepticism at first. Why would anybody contribute? What if some people just used this as a way to get a free trip? How would they handle it if one paid a lot and another was taking advantage and not doing their fair share? But as they thought it through, and considered their relationships, they decided that maybe this could work. Maybe if each one gave what they were able, there would be enough. And if grace was required, well, this couldn't this be a chance to practice what we preach.

Have you ever experienced a dilemma like this one in your church, or in another group? How did you address it?

Are you a person of means? Chances are, if you are reading this, you are. In the North American context a focus on the super-rich can leave us feeling like our means are meager in comparison. Yet even a person with an annual income of \$5,445, (half the United States Department of Health and Human Services poverty guideline), has a higher income than eighty-five percent of the people on earth.

On the website “Global Rich List” ([www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com)), you can enter your income and see where you rank in the world context. It can be an eye-opening experience! The 25 richest people in the world have more combined income than the 25 million poorest. When we compare what we have with those whose incomes are similar to or higher than our own, and do not consider those with lower income levels, we get a skewed view of how rich we are.

What influences your sense of how wealthy you are?

How does it feel to think of yourself as a person of means?



Paul recognized that the Macedonian Christians had limited means financially, but he also realized that they were blessed by God. They had some capacity to give. His expectation of their gift was small, because their quantity of resources was small. But Paul did expect them to make a gift in proportion to their financial means. The idea of a proportionate offering was consistent with the Hebraic tradition that Paul knew prior to his encounter with Jesus. The Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) make clear that offerings are expected to be proportionate to means. Those who have been blessed with much are expected to give in proportion to what they have received. The generosity of individuals is to be an echo of the generosity they have received at God's hand. Since God is the source of all that we have, it is our right and responsibility to participate in the offering, "Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth," - Deuteronomy 8:17-18a

As far back as the book of Genesis, Jacob, in response to his vision at Bethel, committed a tenth of everything that he had to God: "of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you." – Genesis 28:22b

Jesus too, referred to an expectation of generosity proportionate to what had been received. "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." - Luke 12:48b

Do you think about giving as a percentage or proportion of your income?

Have you calculated a tenth of your income?

Does the figure surprise you? Have you, or others in your group, tried tithing?

Paul is clear that contributions to the work of God in the world are not meant to be a work of the law. They are not a way to earn God's favor, but a natural response to the favor we have already received from God. He declares that giving must be voluntary: Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. – II Corinthians 9:7-8

When people consider giving to the work of God in the world, how do they decide on the right amount to give? Do you know a cheerful giver?

When I first began to tithe, (give one tenth of my income), I was a college student with barely any income. It wasn't that hard. A tenth of almost nothing is almost nothing! As I grew older, with a greater income, and responsibilities like a mortgage and children, I have occasionally been surprised at the size of my tithe. Like a mustard seed, that nothing has grown to a significant size. I know that I am free in Christ and could contribute less, yet even when I have seen lean times, I always still seem to have enough.

Tithing is a significant enough contribution that I notice it, which helps me remember my commitment to God in my everyday life. Yet, because my tithe increases or decreases with my income it isn't a burden and it makes me mindful of how much I have been blessed.

The youth group families and the Macedonian Christians were committed to being part of the God's work in the world, recognized how they had been blessed, and willingly contributed according to their means. They dared to trust God and the community of faith!

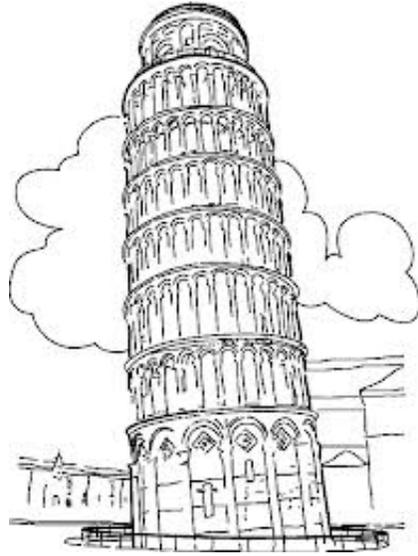
Let us pray,

Lord God, you have generously blessed us. When we were separated from you by sin and death, you gave yourself to overcome the world and include us in your kingdom. Give us eyes to see our wealth, and the courage and generosity we need to love one another and follow you!

# The Ladies Tea: December 15, 2013



# Stabilizing the Leaning Tower of Pisa



After a typical scrumptious and abundant potluck LIFT luncheon, including salads and desserts, on Thursday, December 12, John Schmertmann gave a fascinating presentation to an audience of 21, on how the dangerously leaning Tower of Pisa was finally stabilized.

John, a civil engineer by profession, illustrated his talk with slides, graphs, and diagrams to tell the history of the tower, its structural problems and efforts to find a solution. He graciously accepted the interruption of many questions from his engaged listeners.

The tower was built as a bell tower for the large Cathedral of the city of Pisa, in Italy. Construction started in 1175, but was interrupted twice and completed in 1370. It was built on soft soils not far from the Mediterranean coast, just above sea level. The weight of the tower, 16,000 tons when completed, caused it to settle more on one side than the other, with a tilt evident well before construction ended. The danger was not only that the tower could fall over, but also that it might fall suddenly due to structural collapse in its masonry walls.

Stabilization methods had to be both reversible (in case they did not work as intended) and non-invasive (because the tower had become an icon and treasured tourist attraction). Sixteen prior Italian stabilization Commissions had met over a

period of 90 years, without success. Finally, the Prime Minister of Italy formed the 17<sup>th</sup> in 1990 and a new PM the 18<sup>th</sup> in 1997, both chaired by an engineering friend of John's. The dangerous and complicated stabilization work was finally completed and the tower's tilt was reduced by 10%. The tower closed in 1990 and reopened to the public in 2001. The tower still tilts, but John says it's now safe until at least the year 2200.

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### The Longest Night Service, December 19, 2013

The Longest Night service, A Service of Light in the Midst of Darkness, is held on or near the date of the Winter Solstice. It is a special service of quiet meditation especially for those whose emotions in this festive season are sometimes or overwhelmingly bittersweet. The absence of loved ones who have passed on in the past year, or many years ago, losses of relationships, jobs, health and other sorrows are in contrast to the messages of joy and celebration we hear all around us.

The Longest Night Service was held at ULC this year on December 19. Pastor Collins and Diaconal Minister Shari O'Brien led the liturgy, which included a Reflection by Pastor Collins, lighting Candles of Remembrance to place on the altar, hymns, a time of silence for reflection, Prayers for the Hurting, and holy communion. Special music was provided by Rich and Julia DiFiore and Sondra Collins.

About thirty people attended. Cookies and beverages were served in the Kaiser Center afterwards for all who wished to share in this fellowship.

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Christmas Eve



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## **ULC Financial Statement**

as of November 2013

By Ron Bauldree, Treasurer

Income for November was slightly above expected. However, our expenses are still above regular undesignated income. We have again used some designated funds to pay our bills. December's numbers are not in yet, but the preliminary report is similar.

Please pray for ULC as we begin 2014 and strive to meet expenses. We are working on the 2014 spending plan and all your prayers and even your advice, if you have any, are welcome. The In+Reach Support team will meet Thursday evening, Jan. 9th, at 7 p.m. to try to finalize the plan for Council's consideration.

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ULC People by Pauline Schmertmann

## **PRAYERS**

....remember our seminarians Brenda Maynor and Marissa Tweed

....health and healing for Sandy Bauldree, Kathy Brill and her brother David Larson in ND, Pastor Collins and his family, Loretta Fauerbach, Walt and Betty Flanders, Pastor Janke, Louise Kloeppel, Agnes Martinsen, the family of Chuck Nelson, Shari O'Brien, Betty Reisner, Amy Schirmer in Iraq, Rick Taylor's father Herb, Gloria Westgate, Helen Wiegman, Betty Young, for others we name in our hearts, and for New Year blessings and hope...

## **SOUNDS of MUSIC**

During Advent special music began with the CANTATA directed by our Musical Director Richard DiFiore performed by the choir prior to our traditional ADVENT DINNER on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Visitors who provided special music in addition to the superb music that Rich continually provides:

-Sondra Collins mother Susan (retired elementary music teacher) and her father Roger (retired pastor) from Melbourne Beach added their excellent voices as the choir performed (Sondra soloist) the Advent Cantata.

-Julia DiFiore visited her father Rich, Angela and their daughter Sofia (2 ½) during her holiday break from Vanderbilt where she is completing her

senior year as a music student. Julia's beautiful voice added to several services, even receiving a cheer from her sister Sofia.

On Christmas Eve Julia and Sondra sang a duet and an ensemble of Sondra, Susan, Roger, Julia, and Rich at the piano sang the beautiful

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### A CORRECTION

Portions of two separate items in the ULC People column in *The Lamp Stand* for December, 2013, were somehow omitted. The complete texts are printed below with omissions underlined:

(under "CONGRATULATIONS")

**-Sondra Collins** was invited to participate in the 24-hour Atlanta Opera Project, held earlier this month as part of National Opera Week in Atlanta. It is an opera experience like no other for both participants and audience. Imagine writing, composing, rehearsing and performing a brand new opera in just 24 hours collaborating with people you have probably never met. When the voting was complete, the judges chose Sondra's team as the winner, in which Sondra (pictured...) sang the leading soprano role.

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### Dates to Remember

Tue 1/14/2014	Noon	Executive Meeting
Thur 1/16/2014	7:00 PM	ULC Council Meeting
Thur 1/30/2014	7:00 PM	Lectionary
Fri 1/31/2014	11:00 AM	Guiding Stewards Meeting Congregational Meeting
Sun 2/2/2014	12:00 PM	(after service)

February Newsletter DEADLINE Feb, 24, 2014; the sooner, the better. Thx.

Send submissions to Liz Finn at Liz.Steenson @ gmail.com