



SECOND THOUGHTS

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FROM THE DESK OF

REV. ANDY RIENSTRA

A New Year A New Beginning



January gets its name from the mythical Roman god Janus who was said to have been "two faced." The god had one face with which to look backward and another face with which to look forward. As we begin our New Year together as congregation and interim pastor we will need to be "two-faced," looking back and at the same time keeping our eyes on the future. To help with that task a self study team is being formed and will meet for the first time this month.

It is very important for congregations to know their history so that they can appreciate their heritage and at the same time be aware of the issues and concerns that need to be resolved in order to move freely into the future. As a church looks at its past it also can begin to develop the vision to which the congregation is being called. Hopefully this will happen in the New Year. During the time in between pastorates (the interim) there is usually a shift in leadership. In most congregations over a period of time the leadership begins to take on much of the style and values of the previous pastor. When that pastor leaves, there is often a time when persons who have been in leadership rethink their commitment and determine whether or not they want to continue in leadership positions. Other persons often find the interim time an opportunity to take new leadership roles.

As you reflect on this hopefully it will become apparent that this can be a very exciting period in the history of this church. Some of you who may have been lying back can make a fresh start. A whole new future awaits and perhaps there will be new roles and opportunities for YOU in service and ministry. The study team will be working with the broader congregation in looking at the quality of leadership, gifts for ministry, spiritual passion, leadership structures, worship, education, member relationships and outreach. All of you, young and old, will be given the opportunity to have some input in this process. My wish is that you will all respond with an expectant spirit, reflecting the faith you have that God intends to work in and through this congregation to bringing wholeness and healing.

One of my favorite Bible texts goes like this. "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:13-15)

A mist is a most remarkable and picturesque image. It lasts for only a time and it is gone, and the same is true for each of us. Yet we are a mist and as such we have a very and distinct and striking role in life. We can capture the rays of the sun and produce a rainbow of love and compassion. In the breeze of the day we can splash refreshment in the faces of the weary, and in the stillness of the night the sound of our movement can produce peaceful rest. As mist we can be more pervasive and important than we could imagine if the Lord wills. Although we don't know what the New Year holds, determine to do the will of the Lord as we share together in various ways to shape the future life of this congregation in ministry.

On the Way to Bethlehem...revisited

"I wonder how the prophets listened to God..."

"I wonder if there are still prophets today who can show us the way to Bethlehem?"

"I wonder how Mary felt when the angel spoke to her?"

"I wonder how the shepherds felt when the angel spoke to them?"

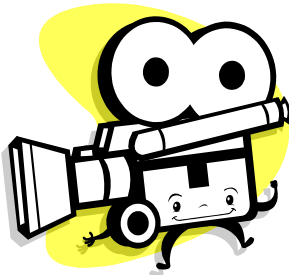
"I wonder how the Magi knew the star was special when others just saw a star?"

On Dec. 18 the children of SRC did a great job in presenting
"On the Way to Bethlehem" through verse, song, drama and candle lighting.

Thank you children, teens, parents, teachers, Mrs. Koops and Rev. Rienstra
for making that Sunday service a meaningful and memorable one.

Phyllis Beals

Joseph and the Amazing Dream coat.... comes to SRC Sunday School!



The children's Sunday School program gets back in swing **Sunday Jan. 8** with the dramatic and fascinating story of Joseph and his brothers. Since our children enjoy acting out the stories so much, we will go over the story on Jan. 8 and if the kids are interested, act out the story on Jan 15. The Teen Youth Group also resumes this Sunday with their movie clip prompted discussions, fun group activities such as basketball games, bowling, movies and service opportunities as well. Friends and newcomers are always welcome, so don't be shy about inviting them.

Phyllis Beals

Women's Lunch "Clean-up Bucket" Update

Last month the women's luncheon group collected \$96.00. This money will be used to compile two buckets. These buckets will be filled with cleaning supplies and shipped to families in the United States affected by hurricanes and other natural disasters. Thank you to all the women who helped make this possible.

The January women's lunch will be held on Tuesday, January 10th at noon. All women of SRC and their friends are always invited. Please bring a bagged lunch. Dessert will be supplied.

Martha Palmer

ADVANCE NOTICE: LADIES....MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Crossroads is coming, Crossroads is coming!

The annual trip to Harvey Cedars in Long Beach Island, NJ is scheduled for **Friday, April 21 and Saturday, April 22nd**. This is a time for renewal and fellowship, worship and singing, fun and friendship and reflection and praise!!

Keynote Speaker this year is Rev. Renee House (a former SRC member!)

Come and experience the peace of God in the natural beauty of LBI.

Join them for a day or weekend.

For more information, visit their website at <http://www.crossroadsrca.org>

Registration forms will be available in the church office in mid-February.

Registration dateline is *March 31, 2006*.

Happy & Healthy New Year 2006!



Thanks goes to Joan Boelhouwer and Helmut Horr who submitted the following jokes.
Start the year off with a smile on your face!



HYMNS FOR EVERYONE

The Dentist's Hymn	Crown Him with Many Crowns
The Weathermen's Hymn	There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
The Contractor's Hymn	The Church's One Foundation
The Tailor's Hymn	Holy, Holy, Holy
The Golfer's Hymn	There's a Green Hill Far Away
The Politician's Hymn	Standing on the Promises
The Optometrist's Hymn	Open My Eyes That I Might See
The IRS Agent's Hymn	I Surrender All
The Gossip's Hymn	Pass It On
The Electrician's Hymn	Send The Light
The Realtor's Hymn	I've Got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop
The Doctor's Hymn	The Great Physician



HOW TO TELL YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED FOREVER

1. Your kids see your wedding photos and ask, "Who are these people?"
2. He wears socks to bed....and so do you.
3. You call yourselves mommy and daddy without even noticing.
4. What you've memorized about him; his shoe size, waist size, neck size, arm length, inseam length, starch preference in shirts, and the date of his parent's anniversary.
5. What he's memorized about you: your birthday.
6. You used to bond over loving the same movies, books, and music. Now you bond over hating the refs at your daughter's soccer games.
7. You can finish each other's stories word for word. And you do.
8. Your underpants (white, cotton, roomy) look pretty much the same as his underpants.
9. You and he are now your family's primary consumers of baby aspirin (to ward off heart attacks).
10. You no longer bother to sneak your ice cream.
11. You don't remind him to put his plates in the dishwasher because you know he'd just remind you to turn off the lights when you leave a room.
12. By common consent, New Year's Eve ends at 10:00 pm
13. You can tell what the other is thinking just by the way he or she says hi.