



A Baby Shower for John the Baptist



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Literacy Project Helps Young Readers

Quilters Make a Difference

The Face of Stroke

A Lutheran Disaster Volunteer Blitz Challenge

Good Shepherd Celebrates a Century of Service



By Pastor Bruce MacLaughlin, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Easton

“Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives ... were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.”

Those words come from the Gospel lesson for June 24, 2007, the commemoration of John the Baptist. Luke 1:57-67 tells the story of John the Baptist’s birth.

Six or seven times a year, the praise team at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Easton, plans a thematic worship service focusing on a particular theme in the lessons appointed for that Sunday. Their goal is to come up with creative ideas to help worshippers experience the selected theme.

For June 23 and June 24, 2007, the praise team came up with the idea of having a baby shower for John the Baptist.

Members of the praise team went to Boscov’s, Bon-Ton, Kohls, and Babies-R-Us, where they registered for gifts. The baby shower was announced in the Sunday worship booklet and the June newsletter:

Special Invitation

Friends and family of Zechariah and Elizabeth invite you to a “Baby Shower” to be held Saturday, June 23, at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 24, at 8:15 and 11:00 a.m. It’s rumored that Zechariah and Elizabeth are having a boy – but all baby shower gifts will be welcomed. Don’t worry about duplicates; all gifts will be given to a worthy cause

(Turning Point and Third Street Alliance). Zechariah and Elizabeth have registered at Boscov's, Bon-Ton, Kohl's, and Babies-R-U's under the name of Good Shepherd ("Good" is the first name and "Shepherd" is the last name). Please plan to join us for this special event. (P.S. In worship on June 23 and June 24, we will be celebrating the festival of John the Baptist.)

On June 23 and 24, the narthex was decorated for a baby shower and refreshments were served following worship. Napkins were in the shape of a diaper. Small packages of cookies, wrapped in blue paper with the words, "And his name shall be John," were handed out.

During worship, people were invited to come forward during the offering and place their baby shower gifts in a Pack-n-Play set up next to the baptismal font.

"Baby John the Baptist" received approximately one hundred gifts. These included diapers, pacifiers, lotions, bath items, stuffed animals, bottles, clothing, blankets, educational toys, puppets, and more. All gifts were then given to Turning Point and Third Street Alliance.

The Good Shepherd praise team has been meeting and finding unusual ways for worshippers to experience worship themes since 2002, when Good Shepherd celebrated its 100th anniversary. During one "Good Shepherd" Sunday focusing on the passage, "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out," people were called by name to come to the altar and receive Holy Communion.

Another time, bottles of water were given out to highlight Jesus telling a Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

For more information about the praise team ideas, contact Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 610-258-0081.



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By Paige Rex, St. Paul, Summit Hill

Four years ago, the members of the Disciples of Christ Committee (DOCS) of St. Paul, Summit Hill, decided that they would like to do something for the children of the community.

They contacted the principal of the Panther Valley School District to find out what might be helpful to the children. One of the suggestions was to give a book to each kindergarten child.

The DOCS Committee and members of St. Paul's believe that literacy is a stepping stone to the future, so DOCS committee members voted unanimously to take on the project. They decided to provide a book to each kindergarten child in the Panther Valley School District, including children attending Our Lady of Angels Academy (a private school funded by the Roman Catholic Church).

Thus was born the Literacy Project of St. Paul's.

The first year, 175 books were distributed. Each year the number of books has increased.

In May 2007, 190 copies of the book, *Love You Forever*, by Robert Munsch were presented to each kindergarten child in the Panther Valley. Pastor John F. Hazel Jr. read a story to the children and spoke of the importance of being able to read well. Following Pastor Hazel's talk, members of the DOCS committee distributed a book to each child.

In addition to distributing the books, each year St. Paul's has held a Literacy Sunday. Literacy Sunday features a special Litany for Literacy. A temple talk on the impact of reading is given by a



member of the DOCS committee. Members bring some of their favorite books and place them on display. A free-will offering is taken in support of the Literacy Program.

A variety of fund-raising projects in support of the Literacy Project are held by the DOCS committee throughout the year. Some of the projects benefit other causes as well as the Literacy Project.

Fund-raisers have also been held at Burger King in Lehighton. Burger King donates 20 percent of its inside sales toward the Literacy Program on a designated date and time. On that day, members of St. Paul's DOCS committee bus tables and perform some general clean-up tasks at Burger King.

In addition, Walden Books, located in the Laurel Mall, Hazleton, has provided a discount on the books. Additional funding has been provided through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The DOCS committee was first organized in 1997 to plan a One Hundredth Anniversary Celebration for St. Paul's church building. The committee remained together to plan a 150th anniversary celebration for the founding of St. Paul's as a congregation. Following these two celebrations, members of the committee decided to remain together as a tool for outreach to the community, the church, and the world.

Other projects sponsored by the DOCS committee include providing funds toward the four year high school education of a youth in Tanzania, assisting families in need in the community through payment of fuel, electric, or hospital bills, and working with the Summit Hill Interdenominational Youth Group on activities such as distributing treats and Christian pamphlets to children on Halloween Fright Night.

The DOCS group provides services to St. Paul's members by organizing and publishing the church newsletter, providing a tape ministry and home communion to shut-in members, and sending flowers to new members and sympathy or get well cards to members.

Members of the Disciple of Christ committee are Pastor John F. Hazel, Jr., Gary Blake (president), Edward Nunemacher (vice president), Sheri Buzik (treasurer), Paige Rex (secretary), Donna Miller, Emma Weaver, Mary Ann Hazel, and Robert Breiner, Sr.



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By Marjorie Paul, Arndts Lutheran Church, Easton

On a rainy Saturday morning in late October, 11 women and several men gathered in the church basement to pin together and sew quilts. Their goal? Fifty quilts by 8 p.m.

That Saturday, October 27, was national *Make a Difference Day*, an observance started in 2005 by USA Weekend magazine.

The folks gathered in the basement at Arndts were doing just that – making a difference – for the Safe Harbor shelter in Easton, a homeless shelter in New Orleans, and Lutheran World Relief.

Spearheading the venture was Arndts member Marjorie Paul. She suggested that Arndts "make a difference" by recycling donated old blankets into new three-layered quilts.

"Our motto is 'A Simple Quilt for Suffering People!' Marjorie explained.

"I introduced this ministry to the congregation in August by draping 10 quilts that I had already completed over the pews and pinning this note to them:



What's THIS?

A Simple Quilt for Suffering People!

Why is it HERE?

To introduce you to a new ministry here at [Arndts!](#)

But I CAN'T SEW!

*You can help in so many other ways. Here's one: these "quilts" are all made from **recycled bedding**: pillow cases, sheets, bedspreads, mattress pads... **any size, any condition!** Maybe you have some you could donate. There's a **storage bin in the hallway** where you could drop it off!*

Well, maybe I CAN SEW, or at least I could TRY!

Great! The sewing part is EASY... and you could make these at home. I'm putting together easy-to-follow "How to" instructions.

But I'd rather work with OTHER PEOPLE.

Well, then I've got just the thing for you! Mark your calendar NOW for our first:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Saturday, October 27
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

*We'll be **sewing our quilts** from morning to night here at Arndt's and will need the help of **sewers and non-sewers** alike (you can help for any part of the day).*

Who's in charge?

*Well, I'd have to say that **GOD is in charge!** I just answered the call to get involved... I sure could use your help! Call me (Marjorie Paul) at **610-252-7964**.*

Let's make a difference...

TOGETHER!

"That got everyone's attention!" she laughed. "We had more than enough donations of sheets, blankets, pillowcases, bedspreads, mattress pads, and odds and ends of new material."

Marjorie's husband, Howard Paul, was one of the men helping at the event. He and two other people, Louise Hawk and Denise Adams, cut and pinned together blankets in the first step in making the next quilt.

"This is an easy way of giving back by helping someone else," said Denise Adams.

Marjorie Paul spoke about her dreams for the project: "Our prayer and hope is that, through publicity, other ELCA churches would decide to adopt this ministry, and that each church would commit to making 50 'simple quilts' on the fourth Saturday of October,"

she said. "It coordinates nicely with Reformation Sunday, and would be an awesome example of the church putting its faith into action!

"Imagine... 50 x 10,549 congregations! How about a goal of 100, two from each state? That's very modest. Imagine!

Marjorie is willing to put together a simple "how to" packet, including tips on getting the congregation involved. She and her husband have a website with information at users.rcn.com/paulh1/simplequilts (no www first). She and others from the congregation are willing to speak to groups that might be interested.

And, yes, they made their goal – and then some.

"We completed 52 quilts," noted Marjorie. "I took 15 of them to Safe Harbor yesterday, 10 will go to New Orleans, and 27 will go to Lutheran World Relief."



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For Krista Harakal and her family, Good Shepherd has been a place of healing on many levels.

As her 14-year-old daughter lay in Hershey Medical Center recovering from a stroke, Valerie Harakal prayed as only a mother could. In a book outside the intensive care unit, a literary gathering place where others shared their hopes, their fears, their pleas, Valerie opened her heart and wrote. "I prayed that Krista would be okay," she recalls, tears welling in her eyes, "because she's my best friend and I wouldn't know what to do without her."

It was one of many prayers Valerie and the rest of her family, husband Jeff and son Josh, would make in the weeks and months to follow as Krista, diagnosed with a rare brain disorder, continued her brave recovery with help from her family and team of therapists at Good Shepherd.

It's rare for children to have strokes – they occur in about 3 out every 100,000 children per year, according to the National Stroke Association, but Krista was one of those cases. It affected her speech, making it difficult to articulate clearly the torrent of ideas that come spilling out of this adorable now 15-year-old who loves shopping and her best pal, her dog Roxie.

Krista was in 7th grade when she began having fainting spells. It later turned out these were transient ischemic attacks, or what the American Heart Association describes as "warning strokes" producing stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage. At the time, though, a diagnosis was elusive. Valerie and Jeff eventually took Krista to Hershey Medical Center, where on Christmas Eve 2005, a pediatric neurologist diagnosed Krista with Moyamoya, a progressive cerebrovascular disorder caused by blocked arteries at the base of the brain. The name means "puff of smoke" in



Japanese because it describes the look of the tangle of tiny vessels formed in the brain to compensate for the blockage, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. The disease was first described in Japan in the 1960s and primarily affects children. Its first symptom is often a stroke or mini-strokes.

Although neither Valerie nor Jeff had ever heard of the disease, they were relieved to get a diagnosis and learn that brain surgery to restore the flow of blood could help Krista live a normal life. The family went home, planning to return at a later date for the first of two brain surgeries. But a week later, Krista had her stroke and was rushed back to Hershey.

Krista eventually underwent two four-and-a-half hour surgeries. She came through with flying colors but will be monitored periodically for the rest of her life to ensure her brain remains healthy.

What was harder to accept was the stroke. "I don't think I saw my husband cry as hard as he cried that day," Valerie says.

Adds Jeff, "Fear set in more than anything, not knowing how she'd recover. That caught us all off-guard."

Charmed Lives

For a family of high achievers who had been living a charmed life, Krista's stroke would challenge them in ways never before imagined, causing them to draw upon inner resources of strength and love.

Life had been good to the Harakals. Along with their lively mixed-breed pooch Roxie (who visited Krista while she was at Hershey and helped pull her through), the family lived comfortably in a cozy home tucked into a quiet cul-de-sac in Northampton. Krista, an honors student, and her older brother Josh were bright, popular, and accomplished in sports. Krista performed in school plays and had served on Student Council since 5th grade.

But suddenly, the fabric of daily life unraveled. Valerie spent nearly a month with Krista at Hershey, leaving Jeff and Josh to carry on as best they could. Jeff's job as an engineering manager at Agere was demanding with long hours. Josh, then a senior at Northampton Area High School, was trying to decide which college to attend.

"It was hard getting used to no one being there," Josh says. "My aunt, Lynn Billings, helped a lot. She came over and cooked dinner."

Josh also felt the sting of lost friendships, as did the rest of the family, something that still hurts to this day and leaves them at a loss to explain.

“We were shocked by some friends who turned their backs on us,” Jeff says. “Family is the only one who will be there for you.”

An Extended Family

But the Harakals discovered they weren't alone. Once Krista began her therapy at Good Shepherd, her family instantly expanded to include a circle of caregivers – physical, occupational and speech therapists, all who embraced them with kindness and compassion.

“We were here one time and I knew we'd made the right decision,” Valerie says. The family already knew of Good Shepherd's excellent reputation, but after leaving the supportive environment of Hershey Medical Center, Valerie was worried whether anyplace else could measure up.

At Good Shepherd, she realized her fears were unfounded. Not only did Krista's team of therapists bring clinical expertise to the table, their hearts helped build relationships that pulled Krista and the entire family through the tangle of emotions common to stroke survivors and their loved ones.

“I really feel like people care about me here,” Krista says.

“It's not just a job for them,” Valerie adds. “It's genuine. You can't fake that. I told her first speech therapist, Jeanie Metzger, you didn't just help Krista, you healed our whole family.”

Guiding Krista through her weekly therapy sessions now is speech-language pathologist Denise Moyer. “She's a teenager, so her life is to talk to her friends,” Denise says. “I want her to form those relationships and not lose them early on because she can't communicate well.”

One tool in her arsenal is the Visi-Pitch IV, a computer program that records and analyzes speech patterns and plays them back. Not only can Krista hear herself, but she can see on the monitor where her words begin and end, and where she needs improvement.

“I think the computer will be huge for her,” Denise says.

Changed Lives

Despite everything that's happened, Valerie Harakal still believes her family is living a charmed life. “You're truly charmed when adversity enters your life and you get through it,” she says.

Josh, 19, and now a freshman at Lehigh University, is closer than ever with his little sister, whom he and his girlfriend helped recover by playing board games together. “I learned that my sister is a pretty strong person,” he says. “I don't think I would have handled it as well.”

Jeff has re-assessed his workaholic ways and makes a point of spending more time with Krista and helping take her to therapy. Valerie has also taken stock of things and started classes at Lehigh-Carbon Community College where she is studying to become a certified occupational therapy assistant.

Krista, too, who last year was nominated for Pennsylvania's Stroke Survivor of the Year Award, has changed. She'd always been interested in becoming a lawyer but now is also considering occupational therapy as a career. She's back at Northampton Area High School full time taking 9th grade honors classes in English and History, still serves on Student Council (which last year raised \$200 for Good Shepherd), plans on running for class president, and talks about volunteering at Good Shepherd with her mother.

Early on when Krista's medical odyssey was beginning, she said something profoundly moving. She doesn't remember it, but her mother does, and she repeats it as an affirmation of life and hope. "Krista said, 'Mom, I don't know what's wrong, but I think this is my wake-up call from God. I'm not mad at God, but I think there's a bigger plan for me and this is to help me realize what's important in life.'"

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The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

A Lutheran

Disaster Volunteer Blitz Challenge



By Ruth Doty, Lutheran Disaster Response Network – NE PA

Camp Victor in Mississippi has challenged volunteers from across the nation to be part of a November and December Blitz to (re)build on the Gulf coast. At Lutheran sites alone, there are 5500 pending work orders for people in need.

The challenge laid before us is to fill the over 900 beds, cots, and air mattresses at 11 Lutheran sites in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas every week for the next two months.

Hear the prayer of our brothers and sisters:

Come, skilled and unskilled construction workers,
compassionate listeners, prayer pilgrims!

Come exploratory teams for future mission trips!

Come partners in long-term hurricane recovery!

Come, as individuals,

with co-workers,

or with a church group!

But, come.

Please come.

Come, soon.

And

be open to God's Spirit blessing you as you serve.

For more info contact, Camp Victor, 228-282-3754 or www.campvictor.org

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For 100 years, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network has served the men, women, and children of eastern Pennsylvania. From its humble beginnings as a home for children with disabilities and senior citizens to its current status as a national rehabilitation leader, the organization's focus has always been on helping patients, clients, and residents live fuller lives.

Good Shepherd is celebrating a century of service with a full slate of events and activities, lasting throughout much of 2008:

- In September, Good Shepherd began its year-long 100th anniversary celebration at the Celebrity Classic Gala at Stabler Arena in Bethlehem. The event drew more than 600 community members and supporters.
- Throughout the year, individuals who have had their lives touched by Good Shepherd (former patients, residents, employees, and so forth) are asked to submit their fondest memories in writing. The memories will be posted on Good Shepherd's 100th anniversary website. Send stories to communications@gsrh.org or call Patty Stinner, director of Marketing and Communications, at 610-776-3166.
- A special Raker Memorial Awards ceremony will be held on February 21, 2008, at Grace Lutheran Church in Allentown. The event will commemorate the actual 100th anniversary of Good Shepherd, when the Rev. John H. and D. Estella Raker invited an orphan with a disability into their home.
- On May 31, 2008, a special 100th Anniversary Gala will be held on Good Shepherd's south Allentown campus. Invited guests will take a walk through history, learning about Good Shepherd and having fun along the way.
- In July 2008, Good Shepherd Penn Partners (GSPP) will officially open in Philadelphia. GSPP is a joint venture between



Good Shepherd and the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS). GSPP will provide post-acute care for the entire UPHS network.

- Next October, Good Shepherd will convene a high-level technology summit that will change the way the world looks at disability forever.

For more information on Good Shepherd's 100th anniversary, plus an interactive time line, a quiz game, a virtual scrapbook, and more, visit www.GoodShepherdRehab.org/100.

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