



The Potter in the Pulpit

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The Potter in the Pulpit



By Leslie Wagner, member, Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven

Dan Bell never thought of himself as artistic but from the moment he sat down at a potter's wheel, there was something there. He felt as if he knew instinctively how to use it and what to do.

The year was 1980 and a college art requirement needed to be fulfilled. Dan's first choice, stained glass, was full, so he took pottery and uncovered a talent – and hobby – that he enjoys to this day.

This past September, Pastor Dan Bell shared this hobby with his congregation at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Schuylkill Haven. The Christian education committee decided to use a vacation Bible school program – *Jerusalem Marketplace* (Group Publishing) – to create a Rally Day event that would appeal to the whole church family.

Every part of the church property was used for the event. There were nine different shops in the marketplace. A well at the center of "town" was at the entrance where visitors were invited to wash and oil their feet (shoes were optional).

A Jerusalem street scene was built to connect the outdoor pavilion and Green Space to the indoor shops. Outside there were animals and kids' activities. Visitors made dreidels (four-sided spinning tops) and learned how to play the dreidel game; they practiced writing Hebrew letters on parchment scrolls and danced the hora.

Participants and visitors wore period costumes that were borrowed from generous friends at St. John Lutheran Church, Tamaqua. Each shop featured an interactive activity designed to



engage visitors with shopkeepers.

Pastor Dan ran the pottery shop. Tying the Sunday morning worship service to the marketplace event that followed was the goal; clay became the 'connecting' material.

Dan has both an electric and a pedal potter's wheel. The electric wheel was set up in the sanctuary and the 'pulpit potter' threw a pot while preaching that day. Children were invited to sit around the wheel and a lesson from Jeremiah 18 came to life as Pastor Dan talked of the Master Potter and humanity as the clay that comes to life in the Master Potter's hands.

Another interesting – and historic – connection was made that day. The pot that Pastor Bell created during the service became the vessel that held the church mortgage that the congregation joyfully burned the following week!