

FAITH NEWSLETTER

August / September 2007



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What do you think about a Christian stewardship program that is based on the need of the giver to give and not based on the need of the church to receive? What is your reaction to a Christian stewardship program that focuses on the Biblical principle of grace-motivating giving and not on church budget shortfalls? Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? Well, there exists such a program. I want to share with you a Christian stewardship education program founded on the Lutheran understanding of biblical stewardship principles. Its name is Consecrated Stewards and it is a ministry of growth and commitment in which the people of God celebrate God's gifts and grow in the joy of giving and serving. The Consecrated Stewards approach embraces the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) definition of Christian stewardship, which is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

Developed by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in cooperation with various Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) stewardship leaders and Mr. Herb Miller, the original developer of the "New Consecration Sunday" resources, Consecrated Stewards helps awaken in Christians the Spirit-led desire to make a joyous response to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Consecrated Stewards is "God's show," so to speak, that is designed as a spiritually motivating stewardship program based on Biblical principles of percentage-based, sacrificial giving that helps congregations cultivate grace-motivated stewards. The Consecrated Stewards approach has helped congregations experience growth in estimates of envelope giving by 15% to 35%, depending upon the level of cooperation and participation from its members.

Living as redeemed and forgiven people of God, we want to give regular attention to serving one another. By the grace of God, we perform activities essential to the church's mission of sharing the Good News that Jesus poured out His salvation love on the cross for all people. Therefore, along with St. Paul in Romans 12:1-2, I too "...urge you...in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices.... Do not conform...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what [is] God's... good, pleasing and perfect will."

Yes, people of God, "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works...able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (Eph. 2:10; 3:20; 4:1)

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive...as the Lord forgave you. And ...put on love.... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3:12-17)

Thanks be to God that His grace overflows! Because of God's gracious love, there is nothing you or I can give that we have not first received from God. In Christian stewardship, the Christian manages his or her redeemed life and possessions by the Spirit's power and direction through God's Word. (cf. Eph 2:1-10) Christian stewardship is faith in action to God's glory and for our neighbor's benefit. There is no need to fear doing it God's way! Trust God and take Him at His Word.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Steve Bocklage

In and Around Faith Church

LWML

I want to thank everyone that participated in our Program "Welcome Home Boxes" for Katrina victims. The items will be packed and turned over for shipment.

Check the next issue of the *Quarterly* for a list of projects the delegates voted to be funded over the next two years.

Grace Scott

Faith Ladies Aid

Though we have not had our monthly meetings during the summer, it has been so nice to see our ladies at church or at the many activities Faith has had.

We are sending a special "Get well Prayer" to so many of our ladies who have been on the sick list and a special *Hello* and blessing to our "Sunshine Lady" Hertha Fahlberg for a speedy recovery.

Our September meeting will be on Thursday the 6th at 7:00 PM. Ladies please come with your ideas for the Fall Bazaar. But most of all just come and enjoy Christian fellowship.

Kathleen Nowak
Membership Chairman

VBS

We had 38 children attend our VBS this year. Several children were with us in the past with many new faces also. Our young group ages 3 – 6 years old totaled 12 students.

We were successful because of the following wonderful people.

Our teachers: Pastor Bocklage, Ed Neaves, Barb Tebo, Anna Bocklage and Celeste Oslakovic.

Our energetic teen helpers: Christina and Elise Trojanowski and Brittany Rheinwald.

Our fabulous kitchen crew and all around helpers: Anna O'Neal, Shirley Burkett, Arlene Banks, Erma Johnson, Marge Ketchum and Gail Henson.

Thank you all.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

In the church year, we are in or approaching the season of "volunteer acquisition," as some think of it, for fall programming. I wonder if in the early Christian community the leaders thought of other members of the community as "volunteers." While technically the distinction between paid staff and volunteers has some reality to it, is there another reality that negates? Is it a concept that is useful in teaching discipleship? Does it make any sense to think of ones self as a "volunteer disciple" in contrast to a "professional disciple?"

What is dishonest about the term "volunteer" as it applies to working for the Kingdom is that participation is optional. It is a call, not a hobby. So why not reflect that in our language, since language shapes thinking? One option is "coordination of member ministry." When you think of it that way, you realize there is a two-way direction. Recruiting people is a one way street; it implies that we have a role we want someone to fill. Perhaps someone has a call for which there is no existing role. That would be good to know. So if the contact were, "I'd like to talk with you about your ministry through the church this coming year. Do you have any guidance about what that might be? Why don't we take a moment to pray about it?" In that conversation, you can tell them about roles you hope will be filled. But the two of you can also listen for surprises that the spirit may have in store for them and for the church.

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Schedule of August / September 2007 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>August Event</u>
4	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
5	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
12	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
18	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
19	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
26	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Five Finger Prayer

1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."

2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

5. And lastly comes our little finger - the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.
 Happy moments, praise God.
 Difficult moments, seek God.
 Quiet moments, worship God.
 Painful moments, trust God.
 Every moment, thank God.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>September Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
2	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
9	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
23	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
30	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

AA Groups	M & F - 6:00 PM
	Sat - 8:00 AM
Bible Study	Fri. - 10:30 AM
Girl Scouts	Tu - 6:00 PM F - 6:30 PM
ALANON	Tu - 7:00 PM
Choir	W - 6:30 PM
Seniors	(Third) - Th. - 12:00 PM
6 th Gr. Confirmation	Tu - 7:00PM
Ladies Aid	(First) - Th. - 7:00 PM



TIPS FOR SHARING

Be gentle and respectful.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."
 1Peter 3:15

Is the timing right for conversation? There are times for serious conversation and times for light-hearted fun. If your family member feels that each time you get together there will be a serious conversation, they may steer clear of you. Pray that God shows you the proper times for faith-sharing conversations.

August / September Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

<u>Worship</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Aug. 5	Frank Oslakovic Bill Weems Nick Trojanowski Glenn Werth	Sept. 2	Gene Osmanski Bill Weems Al Skopec Andrea Skopec
Aug. 12	Richard Clark Howard Johnson Dory Moeller	Sept. 9	Richard Clark Mark Trojanowski Bob Stegmann
Aug. 19	Ed Neaves Alden Ketchum Christina Trojanowski Elise Trojanowski	Sept. 16	Ed Neaves Alden Ketchum Nick Trojanowski Glenn Werth
Aug. 26	Frank Oslakovic Gail Henson Mary Slepski	Sept. 23	Frank Oslakovic Howard Johnson Richard Clark
		Sept. 30	Gene Osmanski Bill Weems Gail Henson Mary Slepski
<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>	<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Aug. 5	Anna Bocklage	Sept. 2	Bill Weems
Aug. 12	Nick Trojanowski	Sept. 9	Debbie Hochgesang
Aug. 19	Ed Neaves	Sept. 16	Christina Trojanowski
Aug. 26	Alma Rissky	Sept. 23	Mark Trojanowski
		Sept. 30	Gene Osmanski

Pastor's Corner

*The term **vocation** comes from the Latin word for “calling” and all vocations are equal before God.*

The Doctrine of Vocation – A Christian’s Calling In The World

The doctrine of vocation is a comprehensive doctrine of the Christian life that has to do with faith and sanctification, grace and good works. The doctrine of vocation is realistic...accounting for problems, sins, and confusion that beset each and every vocation. It is a key to Christian ethics and it shows how Christians can influence their culture. The doctrine of vocation is thoroughly Biblical and it transforms ordinary, everyday life with the presence of God. The doctrine of vocation encourages attention to each individual’s uniqueness, talents, and personality. These are valued as gifts of God, who creates and equips each person in a different way for the calling He has in mind for that person’s life. Indeed, God calls us by name to faith through the Gospel (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14) and He calls us by name to a particular office or way of life (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 7:15-20).

God Works Through Us

God transcends His creation and He is in control of it. There is no authority that God has not instituted. God is the only true authority, the only One who holds intrinsic supremacy, the only One who has the right to command (cf. Romans 13:1-6). God works through human beings in their vocations, even through those who do not know Him (cf. Isaiah 45:1, 4-7), to provide for our needs. God’s power and His providential care extend beyond the Church by ruling in the secular realm (cf. Matthew 5:45; 2 Corinthians 9:10).

The Purpose of Vocation

Since God saves us purely by His grace (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9), “...we are His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ for good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). By virtue of our creation, our purpose in life is to do good works that God Himself “prepared” for us to do. God is at work in us to do the works He intends. It is important that we do not confuse how God rules in His two kingdoms (spiritual and earthly) and how we are citizens in both. In God’s spiritual kingdom, we rest in Christ in faith and are totally dependent on God, while in God’s earthly kingdom, we serve our neighbors with good works and are totally dependent on other people (cf. Mark 12:30-31; 1 John 4:10, 19). The purpose of vocation is to love and serve our neighbors. For Christians, loving their neighbor becomes something consciously felt, as faith becomes active in love and service.

Live As You Are Called

Our calling is not a choice out of many options but rather an assignment (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:17). We should indeed accept our callings as having been assigned to us from the Lord. This means we are to be secure in our calling and recognize it as a gift and an office from the hand of God. And when we face our last calling, the summons to die, we can lay down our lives at the foot of the Master, who, having been at work in every other one of our vocations, is at work in this...to bring us to Himself.

Source: “God At Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life” by Gene Edward Veith

Family Involvement Crucial to Long-term Care of Loved One

Recently, opinion letter writers have advocated for senior citizens by addressing protection from elder abuse and the valuable role of family caregivers. Care-giving by family members should not end when a loved one enters a long-term care facility. In fact, as a loved one becomes more dependent on care from others, it is crucial for a family member to advocate for the resident. The following suggestions result from what I learned during the two years my mother resided in a long-term care facility.

Be involved with your loved one as much as possible. Join him/her for selected activities. If possible, visit frequently and at various times so the staff cannot predict when you are coming. This will allow you to acquire a better picture of your loved one's care by various staff members on different shifts. Occasionally spend an extended period of time with your loved one to monitor his/her care, perhaps when your loved one is getting ready for the day or near bedtime - times when your loved one receives the most personal care.

Keep a log of your visits to the facility, recording what you did, what you saw, conversations you had with staff, etc. This information might have significance in the future. Also make your visits productive and stimulating. Look at old photos. Develop an easily handled photo album of key people in your loved one's life to keep in his/her room for frequent reference. Label photos with names of people. Write down your loved one's memories. Play board games or cards. Read aloud short religious devotions or inspirational stories.

Attend care plan meetings the facility has about your loved one. Prior to the meeting, make a written list of the concerns you want discussed and give it to the care plan coordinator ahead of the meeting. Then after the meeting, verify that the care plan has been implemented.

Annually, the facility is evaluated by a state agency (Department of Public Health in Illinois). Ask to see the results of the "survey" and the facility's written response for making the mandated changes. This will help you personally evaluate and monitor the care your loved one is receiving.

Don't just complain about your concerns to the facility. Help encourage changes by putting suggestions for improvements in writing and give them to the appropriate staff. Offer to provide assistance if possible. There is power in numbers. Become actively involved in the facility's family council to advocate for residents and to bring about improvements related to resident care, the environment, etc. If there is no family council, contact the ICARE Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in Springfield at (217) 523-8419 or (800) 842-8538 for information about and assistance with getting a family council started. It is your right to do so!

Ombudsmen are individuals who advocate for residents' rights/quality care and help resolve resident/family member complaints. There is an ombudsman assigned to your facility. This information should be posted at your facility, or you can locate your ombudsman (and access other valuable information as well) at www._ltombudsman.org or by calling (217) 523-8419 or (800) 842-8538.

Although you pay the facility to provide quality care for your loved one, this does not guarantee your loved one will receive the care that you desire or that the state requires. You still need to be an advocate for your loved one. Don't accept the "that's the way it is everywhere" mindset. Needed improvements in long-term care ultimately rest in the hands (eyes and ears) of you - the family members of residents. Please do what you can to foster improvements.

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Remember that it is the Lord who provides for His weary ones!

The Sense of Sin

A Christian woman came to her pastor with a perplexing problem. She had been regular in her church attendance, conscientious in her daily prayers, and consistent in her attendance at the Lord's Supper. However, she had been unable to rid herself of a haunting sense of sin.

"Why it is," she asked, "that my girlfriends who never go to church, and who freely admit that they have never taken religion seriously, are never troubled by any consciousness of guilt?"

Her problem was not new to the pastor. "Tell me," he said, "if I were to lay a hundred pounds of steel on a corpse, would it feel the load?" "No. I'm sure it wouldn't," the woman replied. "Why not?" he asked.

"Because the corpse has no life in it and is unable to feel the weight," she answered. "Exactly!" replied the pastor. "And that is why the person who is still indifferent to spiritual needs can say that she doesn't feel the weight of sin. She's dead---spiritually."

It always has been true that the Christian is more conscious of personal unworthiness---in the sight of God--- than the careless unbeliever. David admitted: "I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me" (Psalm 51: 3, NIV). The apostle Paul, whom God used mightily to spread the Gospel, lamented: "I know that nothing good lives in me ... What a wretched man I am!" (Romans 7:18, 24 NIV).

There is really nothing surprising in the Christian's consciousness of sin. People who walk in darkness are unconscious of smudges on their bodies; but if they walk into the light, they immediately become conscious of their dirty hands.

Christians walk in light. And the closer we walk to the Light of Life, the more conscious we become of our soiled garments. Nor is there anything surprising in our sensitivity to personal guilt. We have seen our sin in terms of Calvary. It was a sensitive heart, a Christian heart, that wrote:

You who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.

No, there was nothing at all surprising in the woman's concern over her personal sin. In fact, her deep concern was a sign that the Spirit of God was working in her heart. Yet she had no reason to worry. For the same Bible that told her that she was a sinner in God's sight also tells her: "Whenever our hearts condemn us ... God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything" (1 John 3:20 NIV).

God, who is greater than our hearts, looks at us not in our sins, but in Christ. In Christ there is abundant pardon and mercy. As the apostle Paul assures us; "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1 NIV).

Sinners? Yes. But forgiven sinners. Forgiven through Christ.

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