

FAITH NEWSLETTER

October / November 2007



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I recently read about an incurable cynic who was trained to be a parachutist. On the day of his first jump, his instructors gave him his last final briefing: "First of all, when we reach the correct altitude, you will jump out of the airplane. You must count to ten slowly and then pull the ripcord. If the chute doesn't open, pull the second cord and the auxiliary chute will open. Keep calm. You will float down to earth and a truck will be waiting to pick you up."

When the time came for the parachutist to jump, he was a bit hesitant. But his instructors pushed him out of the plane, and he began to fall. He counted to ten, but not as slowly as he should have. Then he pulled the ripcord, but the chute didn't open. Slightly unnerved, he pulled the second cord, but the auxiliary chute didn't open. Feeling totally exasperated, he said to himself, "I bet the truck won't be there either!"

Contrary to this unfortunate cynic, you and I are blessed that our triune God provides us with His 'open parachute' of faith, hope, and certainty to believe and trust in Him and His ways. Jesus says, **"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."** (Matthew 17:20) This brings to my mind the special Congregational/Voters meeting held immediately after the worship service on Sunday, September 23, where two resolutions were presented. One resulted in an affirmative vote to purchase a 14-foot aluminum cross and install it on the church lawn at the corner of 97th St. & Melvina Ave. The approximate cost of this project will be \$1,500 and paid with specifically designated memorial monies. This cross will be a visible sign to others that the people of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church believe, teach, and confess that **"...God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)**

As for the second resolution, it resulted in an affirmative vote for Faith Church to participate in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund's (LCEF) *Consecrated Stewards*, which is designed as a spiritually motivating stewardship program based on Biblical principles that helps develop grace-motivated stewards in congregations. The initial cost is \$548 to purchase the program materials and services, with an additional cost of approximately \$900 for the Consecration Sunday luncheon, miscellaneous supplies, and postage. Keep in mind that *Consecrated Stewards* is a ministry of growth and commitment, in which the people of God celebrate God's gifts and grow in the joy of giving of their time, talent, and treasure to honor God and to serve others.

Above all, we must never forget that we are redeemed and forgiven people of God, who want to give regular attention to the will of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while serving one another. Because of God's gracious love, there is nothing you or I can give that we have not first received from God. With the help of God and by His grace, we will be faithful stewards in responsibly carrying out what is essential to the church's mission of sharing the Good News that Jesus poured out His salvation love on the cross for all people.

How is all this possible? Because Christ Jesus makes this promise: **"I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, HE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT"** (John 15:5). Jesus is talking about you and me! "Bear much fruit!" Trust God in all areas of your life. By the strength the Lord gives you, many of the goals you set will be reached for the glory of God! Don't be a cynic or a skeptic or a doubter. Be faithful. Be positive and confident. Be a blessing from God to others!

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Steve Bocklage

In and Around Faith Church

LWML

We had our fall workshop on Sat. September 22nd. At that time we completed filling the Hygiene and Health kits for the Missionary ladies to take on a Mission trip to Honduras. These kits will be given to the Honduran ladies who attend their services.

Grace Scott

Faith Ladies Aid

We had a wonderful turnout for our September meeting, but there is always an empty chair waiting for you.

Please mark Tuesday Nov. 6th for the Church Bazaar. There will be a chili lunch for \$3.00 and the evening Pork roast supper for \$8.50. Save your new or gently used trinkets for the White Elephant. Get out your favorite recipes for the Bake Sale. Be sure to check out our craft table and candles and don't forget our fun raffle with great items.

We have tickets to see the Rockettes on Sunday, Nov. 11th at 4:30 PM. Tickets are \$29 and the bus will leave church at 3:00 PM. Please contact Mary Slepski if interested.

We hope to see you on Thurs. Oct. 1st at 7:00 PM for our next meeting.

Kathleen Nowak
Membership Chairman

Operation Blessing

In their September newsletter, Operation Blessing of Southwest Chicagoland thanked the folks here at Faith for the school supplies that were donated. The last week of August, Pastor and Anna delivered two boxes, heavy with supplies, to the O.B. pantry facility in Crestwood. They were informed that our church's donation was very timely, as there was a client who had come in need of school supplies for her children. Thanks to all who responded to this need in our community.

Be on the lookout in November for a designated collection box, as we assist Operation Blessing by gathering new toys for children of families in need this Christmas.

Do You Know Your (Specific) Hymns?

When you go to Church this Sunday be sure to smile as you look through your hymnal!

Dentist's Hymn	Crown Him with Many Crowns
Weatherman's Hymn	There Shall be Showers of Blessings
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
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 Shopper's Hymn	Sweet Bye and Bye
The Realtor's Hymn	I've got a Mansion Just over the Hilltop
The Massage Therapist's Hymn	He Touched Me
The Doctor's Hymn	The Great Physician

AND for those who speed on the highway—a few hymns

45 mph	God Will Take Care of You
65 mph	Nearer My God to Thee
85 mph	This World Is Not My Home
95 mph	Lord, I'm Coming Home
100 mph	Precious Memories



Schedule of October / November 2007 Events

Date	Time	October Event
6	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
7	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
14	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
20	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
21	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
28	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

The Stewardship Life of the Christian

Christian stewardship 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. It is built on the response of our grateful hearts for the riches given us in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9), both spiritual and material resources.

The stewardship life of the Christian is a continuum, not a point. It is multi-dimensional, not linear. Like light from the sun, it reaches out in all directions. It illuminates and highlights all the gifts of God in your life--even the hidden ones--so they can be managed.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund

How to be a Good Giver and Love it

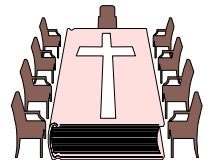
REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU
 REALIZE YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH HIM
 REJOICE AS YOU BRING YOUR GIFTS
 RECOGNIZE YOUR PROPORTIONATE GIFT
 RESPOND WITH FIRST FRUIT GIVING
 RE-ENFORCE IT BY MAKING A PLEDGE
 RECEIVE THE REWARDS

from Church Press September 2007

Date	Time	November Event
3	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
4	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
11	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
17	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
18	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
21	7:00 AM	Thanksgiving Eve Worship / Communion
25	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

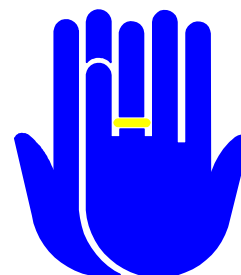
AA Groups	M & F - 6:00 PM Sat - 8:00 AM
Bible Study	Fri. - 10:30 AM
Girl Scouts	Tu - 6:00 PM F - 6:30 PM
ALANON	Tu - 7:00 PM
Choir	W - 6:30 PM
Seniors	(Third) - Th. - 12:00 PM
6 th Gr. Confirmation	Tu - 7:00PM
Ladies Aid	(First) - Th. - 7:00 PM



Thought of the Day

“God has given us two hands, one to receive with and the other to give with.

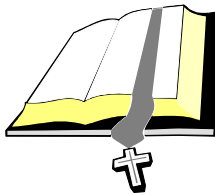
Rev. Billy Graham



October / November Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

<u>Worship</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Oct. 7	Frank Oslakovic Bill Weems Nick Trojanowski Glenn Werth
Oct. 14	Alden Ketchum Gail Henson Mary Slepski
Oct. 21	Ed Neaves Richard Clark Christina Trojanowski Elise Trojanowski
Oct. 28	Gene Osmanski Howard Johnson Bob Stegman

<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Oct. 7	Anna Bocklage
Oct. 14	Nick Trojanowski
Oct. 21	Elise Trojanowski
Oct. 28	Ed Neaves



<u>Worship</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Nov. 4	Frank Oslakovic Bill Weems Al Skopec Andrea Skopec
Nov. 11	Alden Ketchum Mark Trojanowski Dory Moeller
Nov. 18	Ed Neaves Richard Clark Gail Henson Mary Slepski
Nov. 21	7:00 PM Thanksgiving Eve Ed Neaves Richard Clark Glenn Werth Gene Osmanski
Nov. 25	Gene Osmanski Howard Johnson Nick Trojanowski

<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>9:00 AM Sunday</u>
Nov. 4	Bill Weems
Nov. 11	Debbie Hochgesang
Nov. 18	Christina Trojanowski
Nov. 25	Nick Trojanowski

Thank You

“Many thanks for the outpouring of affection and prayers from my new friends of the community of Faith Lutheran Church. Thanks also for the hugs that so many people gave me on the Sunday before my surgery. Hugs are so good!! I thank you and thank the dear Lord for bringing me to the welcoming arms of your wonderful congregation (of which I am now a member, too). It will be some weeks before I get to say this in person, God willing. In the meantime, bless you all! Thank you all.

Joyce Stroh

Pastor's Corner

“It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.”

(2 Corinthians 4:13-14)

What Are The Lutheran Confessions?

Perhaps you have attended an ordination of a pastor and heard him promise that he will perform the duties of his office in accord with the Lutheran Confessions. When people are received into membership into a Lutheran congregation through confirmation they are asked if they confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as they have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true. These solemn promises indicate to us just how important the Lutheran Confessions are for our church. The Confessions are various writings contained in the Book of Concord (1580) including the Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord.

What Is The Connection Between The Bible and The Confessions?

We confess that, "The Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine" (Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 9). What the Bible asserts, God asserts. What the Bible commands, God commands. The authority of the Scriptures is complete, certain and final. The Scriptures are accepted by the Lutheran Confessions as the actual Word of God. The Lutheran Confessions urge us to believe the Scriptures for "they will not lie to you" (Large Catechism, V, 76) and cannot be "false and deceitful" (Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, VII, 96). The Bible is God's "pure, infallible, and unalterable Word" (Preface to The Book Of Concord). The Lutheran Confessions are the "basis, rule, and norm indicating how all doctrines should be judged in conformity with the Word of God" (Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm). Because the Confessions are in complete doctrinal agreement with the written Word of God, they serve as the standard in the Lutheran Church to determine what is faithful Biblical teaching, insofar as that teaching is addressed in the Confessions.

So What Is It To Be Lutheran?

A Lutheran is a person who believes, teaches and confesses the truths of God's Word as they are correctly explained and confessed in the Book of Concord. To do so is to confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Genuine Lutherans, confessional Lutherans, dare to insist that "All doctrines should conform to the standards [the Lutheran Confessions] set forth above. Whatever is contrary to them should be rejected and condemned as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith" (Formula of Concord Epitome, Rule of Norm, 6).

Such a statement may strike some as boastful but it isn't. Rather, it is an expression of the Spirit-led confidence that moves us to speak of our faith before the world. To be a confessional Lutheran is to be one who honors the Word of God. That word makes it clear that it is God's desire for His church to be in agreement about doctrine, and to be of one mind, living in peace with one another (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11). It is for that reason that we so treasure the precious confession of Christian truth that we have in the Book of Concord. For Confessional Lutherans, there is no other collection of documents, or statements or books that so clearly, accurately and comfortingly presents the teachings of God's Word and reveals the Biblical Gospel as does our Book of Concord.

Hand-in-hand with our commitment to pure teaching and confession of the faith, is, and always must be, our equally strong commitment to reaching out boldly with the Gospel and speaking God's truth to the world. In the final analysis that is what "confession" of the Christian faith is all about.

THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

What are the Ecumenical Creeds?

The three ecumenical creeds in the Book of Concord are the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. They are described as "ecumenical" [universal] because they are accepted by Christians worldwide as correct expressions of what God's Word teaches.

What is the Augsburg Confession and Apology of the Augsburg Confession?

In the year 1530, the Lutherans were required to present their confession of faith before the emperor in Augsburg, Germany. Philip Melanchthon wrote the Augsburg Confession and it was read before the imperial court on June 30, 1530. One year later, the Lutherans presented their defense of the Augsburg Confession, which is what "apology" here means. It too was written by Philip Melanchthon. The largest document in the Book of Concord, its longest chapter, is devoted to the most important truth of the Christian faith: the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

What are the Small and Large Catechisms?

Martin Luther realized early on how desperately ignorant the laity and clergy of his day were when it came to even the most basic truths of the Christian faith. Around 1530, he produced two small handbooks to help pastors and the heads of families teach the faith. The Small Catechism and the Large Catechism are organized around six topics: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. So universally accepted were these magnificent doctrinal summaries by Luther, that they were included as part of the Book of Concord.

What are the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope?

In 1537, Martin Luther was asked to prepare a statement of Lutheran belief for use at a church council, if it was called. Luther's bold and vigorous confession of faith was later incorporated into the Book of Concord. It was presented to a group of Lutheran rulers meeting in the town of Smalcald. Philip Melanchthon was asked to expand on the subject of the Roman pope and did so in his treatise, which also was included in the Book of Concord.

What is the Formula of Concord?

After Luther's death in 1546, significant controversies broke out in the Lutheran Church. After much debate and struggle, the Formula of Concord in 1577 put an end to these doctrinal controversies and the Lutheran Church was able to move ahead united in what it believed, taught and confessed. In 1580, all the confessional writings mentioned here were gathered into a single volume, the Book of Concord. Concord is a word that means, "harmony." The Formula of Concord was summarized in a version known as the "Epitome" of the Formula of Concord. This document too is included in the Book of Concord.

For Further Study:

Robert Preus, Getting into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977).

David Scaer, Getting into the Story of Concord: A History of the Book of Concord (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1977).

Loving as He Loves

Provided by Sarah Guldalian of Lutheran Hour Ministries

Editor & Coordinator, "Equipping to Share"

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20: 28). The Son of Man - God of the Universe - came here to serve others. In fact, He loves us - all of us - so much that He came here to give His life for us. As Christ followers, we are called to do as Christ has done, to love as Christ has loved. If the King of Majesty serves, I want to serve.

The purpose of this article is for reassessment in relation to service. In what areas do you serve? Where do you give your time? Do you volunteer your time? Volunteering in service is a gigantic aspect of outreach. And, as an outreach trainer, I want to send you off on a journey to find where the holes or gaps are in your community. Where is there a need? What areas of service are open? Where can you be used to meet a need? Do not underestimate service as a witnessing opportunity.

Many of us volunteer within our churches. This is exceptional because we are, hopefully, assisting new members in a smooth transition into the church body. However, for the purpose of reaching the lost, I would like you to think to yourself: How am I serving outside of my church, as well?

At this point, I anticipate that you are feeling weary about such a notion because there are still many areas of service to fill within your own congregation. Have you ever thought that perhaps those outside of your congregation are outsiders because they haven't been invited inside yet? I feel led to remind you that the people outside of your organization are God's children and many of them are lost.

Volunteering outside of your congregation is a wonderful opportunity to create and nurture relationships towards discipleship, to introduce the lost to their Savior and to include them in the Body, in your congregation. If you are not in your community meeting people, how will you be fisher's of men?

I have the notion - because you are reading this evangelism newsletter - that God has given you a heart for those in need. This may be the lost - those who do not know Christ as their personal Savior. This may also be those marginalized by homelessness or handicap, perhaps poverty or terminal illness. Those in hospice - either by cancer or the diseases that set on with mature age - are in a very dim time of their life, the end here on earth.

By meeting their need with the number 1 ingredient: the Holy Spirit, as well as your time, love, prayer and/or assets, your ability to shine Christ's light into their life is vast. To a life that is desolate and hopeless, a short prayer can mean the world of difference. To an impoverished orphan, \$20 a month can be the difference between life or death - literally. In fact, the Bible instructs us to love and assist God's children who are in need. James 1:14-17 says: "If a brother needs food or clothes, do not simply say 'I wish you well.' Provide his physical needs first."

Please recognize that we - you specifically - are called, as His witness to reach outside of our comfort zone into the unknown. God has immensely blessed us. Imagine how you can bless others through this. God has placed you here at this time for a purpose. He will use you mightily.

That's What My Mother Taught Me and Other Ways Generous Givers Develop **(2001)**

by Herbert Mather

During a two-year period, Herbert Mather interviewed over one hundred people who were described by their pastors as generous givers. He started his study by asking some rather stock questions such as "Why do people give?" and "How do they decide where to give and how much to give?" These questions did not invoke much response. He decided to revise the question and make it open-ended. His new question was "When you hear the word giving today, what experiences or people from your lifetime come to mind?" Mather indicated that immediately people relaxed and stories began to roll off their lips.

Mather's conviction is that "the problems with talking about money in the church are more related to how we talk about money than to the subject matter itself. He found that most generous givers are sensible, but the primary motivation for their generosity is not that they sat down with a financial analyst and determined that their act of giving money to a church was a prudent thing to do. Generous people do not reason their way to generosity; rather their act of giving itself is a wonderful mystery that goes way beyond simple rationality." (pages 8,9)

Mather also observed that "many of the generous people in his study had a sense of responsibility. They had an inner compulsion to 'give back'--not in the sense of paying God back for some specific good but in the sense of responding in a tangible, human way to blessings that have come and will come from God. They are under obligation to pass blessings on to others." (page 70)

In his closing chapter, Mather observes that "there are no rabbits in the hat to solve the issue of funding the church's mission and ministry. This book is not about hat tricks. It is a snapshot of God's marvelous interaction with a variety of God's generous people. It does not tell us how to do church fundraising. The task of the congregation's financial leaders, though, is not primarily about funding. The task is one of spiritual development." (page 109)

Mather weaves his many study findings throughout the following eight provocative chapters:

- 1 - Is Generosity Taught? If So, Who Teaches It?
- 2 - What Has God Got to Do with Giving?
- 3 - Peer Pressure and the Impact of the Community
- 4 - Does Giving Help a Person Be All She or He Can Be?
- 5 - Does God Reward Generosity?
- 6 - Tithing
- 7 - The Offering
- 8 - Some End-of-the-Book Observations

In his personal conclusion, Mather states that "spiritual connections within the congregations may not be the primary factors that initiate giving, but they are essential in supporting the spiritual dimension of giving. There is a connection between the generous people of God and the faith community. People have influence upon one another--for good or for ill. Generosity begets generosity!" (page 113)