

FAITH NEWSLETTER

June / July 2007



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There is an old Irish proverb that says, "A bad habit is like a warm bed; easy to get into, but hard to get out of." Are there good habits you need "to get into?" What bad habits do you need "to get out of?" These and other similar questions wrap themselves around the "C" word. We even cringe when we hear the "C" word..."Change"... being said. There is something residing in each of us that simply does not invite change. But most of us, if not all of us, realize that change can be beneficial and helpful in our lives. Yet, we still need to somehow overcome our resistance to it. A.J. Schuler, Psy. D., has come up with a list of the Top Ten Reasons for Change Resistance:

1. The risk of change is seen as greater than the risk of standing still.
2. People feel connected to other people who are identified with the old way.
3. People have no role models for the new activity.
4. People fear they lack the competence to change.
5. People feel overloaded and overwhelmed.
6. People have a healthy skepticism and want to be sure new ideas are sound.
7. People fear hidden agendas among would-be reformers.
8. People feel the proposed change threatens their notions of themselves.
9. People anticipate a loss of status or quality of life.
10. People genuinely believe that the proposed change is a bad idea.

How many of these reasons pertain to you? Now...think for a moment what pertains to God. We read God's Word that does not change and we meditate on it. We hear the unchangeable Word of truth within Divine Service worship, including the readings, the sermon, the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed, and the hymns. And yet, we still hesitate or resist obeying God. In his letter, James writes, "**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.**" (James 1:22-25)

Be a hearer and a doer of the Word of truth. Listen to God and obey Him. Be accountable to Him and to yourself. Believe God's Word and live accordingly. Be willing to avoid whatever it is that would prevent God's Word from coming to you. Worship God daily by demonstrating the true, unchangeable, saving faith in your heart! After all, as doers of the Word of God, "we are God's **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**" (Ephesians 2:10)

So whatever the challenge or change is in your personal life and church life, trust that the Lord will not forsake you (Hebrews 13:5) and do not forsake Him or His Word or His Sacraments. The unchangeable Word of God can help us when making changes in our lives. "**Now that you know these things,**" Jesus said, "**you will be blessed if you do them.**" (John 13:17) Change does not happen because of what you know. It happens because of what you do everyday. As the wind of change moves through our congregation, we ask the Lord to do mighty and wonderful things with you and me as His people. May each of us pray: "Lord, help me to put my intentions into actions. Guide me to make sure and reveal to me in Your Word that my intentions are within Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Steve Bocklage

In and Around Faith Church

LWML

Our LWML is participating in the “Welcome Home” boxes for Katrina victims. The box consists of new kitchen items.

There is a display board in the Narthex with the items needed. If you are interested in helping please take a ticket from the board, sign the sheet on the back of the board so we know what will be donated. Bring your purchased item to the display table. The cost of large items may be shared.

Our aim is to supply two boxes. For further information contact me.

Grace Scott

Faith Ladies Aid

Our May 3rd Ice Cream Social was a delicious hit. Thanks to all who brought the toppings. The butter pecan ice cream was voted the favorite.

We were happy to have Shirley Burkett as our guest. Get togethers are always extended to all Ladies of Faith.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, June 7th at 6:30 PM. This will be our annual pizza night with Bunco to follow. Please consider joining us.

There will be no meetings in the summer. We’ll resume again on September 6th. Have a wonderful restful summer and come back with energetic and new ideas for our Ladies to continue in God’s work.

Kathleen Nowak
Membership Chairman

Church Picnic

Come join us Sunday June 10th at 11:00 AM at Wolfe Wildlife Refuge 109th & Laramie. Bring a dish for the common table. Hot dogs and soda are provided following a brief service.

If you are interested in playing bingo, please bring a wrapped \$5.00 item for the prize table. We guarantee a good time of Christian fellowship.

Stewardship and More

Help us trust Your Word, Lord Jesus, so that all we say and do honors Your name, in which we pray.

Lord Jesus, we have but little to bring to You, so give to us from Your great mercy. Amen

“It’ll never work!” we say. Our lack of faith in a plan’s author makes it easy to dismiss the plan. Protecting ourselves and our opinions, we use negative words to assert that positive results are impossible.

During Cana’s wedding feast Jesus performed His first miracle of turning water to wine.

Concerning the gifts God gives, human reason always tells us, “It’ll never work.” Baptismal water poured over an infant’s head for salvation, Christ’s body and blood given to communicants for forgiveness, absolution from a pastor for divine remission of sin – “It’ll never work,” reason tell us. But faith lives by Jesus’ promises. With Him, all things surely are possible. (Matthew 19:20)

“Me? I don’t know how. I’ve never done this before,” we often say to ourselves when a call for volunteers is issued. Then we look at our talents and sadly conclude, “I have so little to give.”

But God’s foolishness is greater than human wisdom. What we believe is insufficient, Jesus turns into plenty. He multiplies in ways beyond our comprehension. What we believe is impotent. He employs to perform miracles.

Jesus’ miraculous feeding of the five thousand proclaims that what matters is not what we see, but what we hear. Christ’s death on the cross looks helpless and hopeless, but by it Christ broke the power of sin and death. By it Christ shackled hell and the devil. Though the cross appears to have power over Christ, Christ has power over it. God’s hands are at work, miraculously forging the salvation of the world.

Excerpt from Portals of Prayer

Schedule of June / July 2007 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>June Event</u>
2	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
3	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
10	9:00 AM 11:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg. Church Picnic
16	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
17	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
24	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Children's Msg. Adult Bible Class

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>July Event</u>
1	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
7	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
8	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Children's Msg. Adult Bible Class
15	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
21	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
22	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Children's Msg. Adult Bible Class
29	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class

2007 Graduates

We are looking for the names of those who are graduating from high school or college. We want to give praise to God and also acknowledge their achievement.

Also please let us know the address of any of our members who are away at college. They need to know that their congregation is thinking and praying for them.

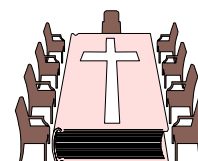
Our Gratitude

Cleaning and polishing, window washing and much more was done at the church and parish hall on May 19th. The following devoted members helped spruce things up. Thanks for your continuing work for the Lord and His house.

Grace Scott	Erma Johnson
Gail Henson	Anna O'Neal
Barb Tebo	Celeste Oslakovic
Shirley Burkett	Ed Neaves
Lucille Henson	Frank Oslakovic
Richard Clark	Lisa Karaus
Jason Karaus	

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 - 7:00 PM
Ladies Aid	(First) - Th. - 7:00 PM



Four Simple Tips for Sharing Our Faith

1. Ask others how they are doing.
2. Listen to their answer...and *care*.
3. Ask if you can pray with them.
4. If they say "yes," pray with them.

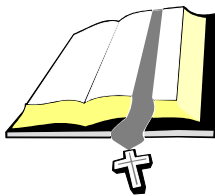
Thought of the Day

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

June / July Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

June 3	Frank Oslakovic Bill Weems Gail Henson Mary Slepski
June 10	Richard Clark Nick Trojanowski Glenn Werth
June 17	Ed Neaves Alden Ketchum Dory Moeller Howard Johnson
June 24	Frank Oslakovic Al Skopec Andrea Skopec



Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

June 3	Anna Bocklage
June 10	Nick Trojanowski
June 17	Ed Neaves
June 24	Alma Risky

Notable Quote by Martin Luther:

“It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor.”

Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

July 1	Bill Weems Richard Clark Christina Trojanowski Elise Trojanowski
July 8	Alden Ketchum Mark Trojanowski Bob Stegmann
July 15	Ed Neaves Frank Oslakovic Nick Trojanowski Glenn Werth
July 22	Bill Weems Colleen Weems Howard Johnson
July 29	Richard Clark Alden Ketchum Gail Henson Mary Slepski

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

July 1	Christina Trojanowski
July 8	Debbie Hochgesang
July 15	Frank Oslakovic
July 22	Bill Weems
July 29	Mark Trojanowski

On July 4th at noon, Lutheran Bible Translators David and Valerie Federwitz and their three children will be at Mt. Greenwood Church 109th and Trumbull. They have recently returned from Ghana, West Africa. Many of us support LBT so they will help us understand what translators do and what life is like for a Christian American family in Africa.

For more information contact The Hullingers at 773-238-4619 or Eunice Domino at 708-422-6834.

Pastor's Corner

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24

God’s Stewards Are Saints and Sinners

This means that God's stewards rejoice in and live out what the Lord has declared them to be through the cross. At the same time, His stewards recognize they are sinners who fight sin and its consequences each day. This principle underscores the classic Lutheran understanding that we are at the very same time saints and sinners. The text of Ephesians 4:22-24 deals with the old self and the new self in that we are to be active in putting off the old self as we are made new (God's doing). We are not able to put off the old self or put on the new self until God has worked the miracle of conversion in us. Then we are able to make choices for good and evil and can no longer use an excuse like "the devil made me do it."

The Hope That Is Within You

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, we find four glowing titles for the children of God. Each title deserves discussion and reflection. For example, what does it mean to be a "chosen people?" Each title is meant to give us encouragement and hope. Peter describes the marvelous transition from being "spiritual nobodies" to becoming "spiritual some bodies!" Because we are "spiritual some bodies," our Christian stewardship includes giving a witness to the hope that is within us because of Christ. Peter emphasizes this when he says in 1 Peter 3:15: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. 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.”

The Challenge

Since we have this God given hope within us, we know that Christian stewardship is always based on God's Word. If people have concerns about any aspects of Christian stewardship, then they will have to deal with God about it. Likewise, the challenge is also realizing that Christian stewardship is a critical part of the way we Christians live our lives. We have to evaluate all we say and write regarding Christian stewardship because it is easy to make it into a "moral issue" rather than treating it as a "Gospel response." Finally, the challenge is that all of God's stewards are not at the same level of Christian maturity. Some stewards are still taking baby steps while others take giant strides, but the truth remains that all of us have fallen short of God's righteous expectations. We are to work patiently with each other, doing that which builds up rather than that which tears down. St. Paul speaks about this kind of conduct in Romans 14 and Galatians 6.

The Free and Joyous Activity

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. As stewards (managers) for God, it is prudent that we carefully and rightly divide Law (what we do) and Gospel (what God does) and apply them properly to our lives. As stewards for God, we are to examine carefully what we do and how we do it when dealing with stewardship activities. Remember that maturing stewards do the right things for the right reasons and strive for excellence in all we do!

Faith congregation is considering this proven Stewardship program

Consecrated Stewards

Consecrated Stewards is a ministry of growth and commitment in which the people of God celebrate His gifts and grow in the joy of giving and serving.

As congregations recognize the need to renew or give regular attention to activities essential to the mission of the church, with increasing frequency they are seeking help in the area of stewardship. Congregations are receptive to even seeking help to address their stewardship needs in a very direct way.

LCEF's Capital Funding Services has developed a resource to meet this stewardship need in congregations. This new resource is being made available through local administration in the District in order to fully address the needs of congregations.

Consecrated Stewards Raises Annual Giving by Raising Christian Stewards

Consecrated Stewards-Overview

Consecrated Stewards is based on the need of the giver to give, not the need of the church to receive.

It is not tied to the church budget, and can be used at any time of year. Budget based emphases never raise more than what is needed to meet the budget. Stewardship emphases raise people to a new level of spiritual commitment and annual giving. Congregations often experience intentions of giving that exceed previous envelope giving by 15%-35%.

Consecrated Stewards is a stewardship education and commitment emphasis. It recognizes that churches that fail to talk about Christian stewardship on a regular basis often wind up talking about money all year long.

Consecrated Stewards is based on the Biblical principles of percentage-based, grace-motivated, sacrificial giving. It urges people to take a step forward in their stewardship life without pressure or legalism. It does not use gimmicks or fund-raising techniques. It emphasizes equal sacrifice, not equal amounts.

<p><i>Consecrated Stewards</i> raises Christian stewards, not just money. It is based on the need of the giver to give, not the need of the church to receive.</p>
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Consecrated Stewards ties the commitment process to the Sunday morning act of worship. It reaches the maximum number of people in the most spiritual setting. It does not have members asking other members one-on-one for a financial commitment.

Consecrated Stewards requires minimal organization:

- Four weeks of preparation and four weeks of emphasis.
- A working committee of seven.
- Usually only four committee meetings plus attention to ongoing stewardship.

Consecrated Stewards utilizes a trained facilitator to keep the process on track, maintain Biblical focus and avoid expensive shortcuts.

Application

Consecrated Stewards is ideally suited for congregations that have struggled with effectively implementing stewardship programs or are looking for a fresh approach. Use of an outside consultant to guide the emphasis assures quality execution while uniquely bringing attention to the Biblical stewardship message. *Consecrated Stewards* is designed to be spiritually motivating rather than outcome driven. It is lightweight: quickly and easily organized, completes in a short time frame, and relatively low cost.

Consecrated Stewards-Features

- Builds on and enhances tested programs and resources from years of LCEF and LCMS stewardship experience and from Herb Miller's "New Consecration Sunday" process. ¹
- Three on-site visits plus phone support from a trained Guest Leader provide customized guidance, design, training and direction to the congregation and leadership.
- Celebration of Ministry. Each week during the four-week emphasis, a ministry of a group within the church is celebrated for their good stewardship of the gifts God has given. On Commitment Sunday a special Celebration Luncheon celebrates the ministry of all in the congregation and provides an opportunity for congregational fellowship and an occasion to announce the results of the morning's commitment.
- Stewardship Journey Talks. Each week a member of the congregation gives a brief stewardship journey witness talk during the worship service. The Guest Leader provides encouragement and guidelines for such talks.
- "Giving Life to the Next Generation" Bible studies. These excellent Lutheran Bible studies are suggested for all Bible classes during the four-week period. Many pastors have also used the accompanying inserts as preaching outlines for sermons during the emphasis.
- Collateral Support. Publicity aids and logos (posters, bulletin inserts, announcements, etc.), sample letters and assistance in customizing those letters.
- Guest Leader Involvement. *Consecrated Stewards* Guest Leaders are specially trained and certified by LCEF. The Guest Leader leads a Bible study or mini-workshop on the Sunday before Commitment Sunday. On Commitment Sunday the Guest Leader brings the stewardship message and leads the commitment process.
- Prayer is essential to the process, supported by resource materials and guidance.

Consecrated Stewards

is ideally suited for congregations that have struggled with effectively implementing stewardship programs or are looking for a fresh approach.

Footnote: The Bible study materials and other resources produced by Capital Funding Services contribute a uniquely Lutheran perspective on stewardship.

¹ CFS has the permission and blessing of Herb Miller to use his "New Consecration Sunday" materials as a resource in *Consecrated Stewards*. CFS has the blessing of the LCMS Department of Stewardship to offer *Consecrated Stewards* to the congregations of Synod. Larry Reinhardt, Director of Stewardship (recently retired) encourages it as another tool to educate people about Biblical stewardship.

Our Motivation as Christ's Witnesses

(from Lutheran Hour Ministries' *Equipping to Share Ministry*)

Some people are not motivated to witness. They simply do not want to step outside of their comfort zone. For those people and...well...all of us, we need encouragement, accountability and a wake-up-call. As a Christian, witnessing isn't optional. None of this: *Well, it didn't work out so well last time. They didn't convert when I asked them to.*

Let us revisit *why* we share our faith.

1. Jesus commanded us!

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore **go** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.'" **Matthew 28:18-20**

Notice what this verse does NOT say: *If you are an outgoing person and sharing your faith comes easily to you, THEN go.*

2. God assigned us this mission. These mission moments are already in His planner!

"He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you **will be** my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea & Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" **Acts 1:7-8**

WE - you and I - are to be His witnesses in our neighborhood, our country and our world. In all of His power and authority, God has already set the times and the dates in place.

3. We belong to God. He chose us.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:9

He *chose* us to declare His praises! We can't choose to undo what God has done. And, why would we want to?

4. People are sick, sad and dying. We have hope.

"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God... For in this hope we were saved."

Romans 8:22-24

Surely you have a friend or family member, heavy on your heart, that you want to share this hope with. They do not have to struggle through life on their own! All you have to do is share the hope you have found in Christ.

Jesus healed the blind man. He healed the leper. He did so not only physically, but He healed them spiritually. He is alive and He is doing this today!

5. Consider yourself privileged.

A reminder, in the words of Abraham: "I am nothing but dust and ashes." **Genesis 18:27**
God does not have to use us. In fact, without His love and His power working through us, we are useless and worthless. He is all-powerful and all capable to take this mission upon Himself. But He loves us and wants us to receive the tremendous blessing of seeing lives changed and heavenly eternity opened to the lost.

ASAP

Ever wonder about the abbreviation A.S.A.P.? Generally we think of it in terms of even more hurry and stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of the abbreviation in a different manner, we will begin to find a new way to deal with these rough days along the way.

There's work to do, deadlines to meet;
You've got no time to spare,
But as you hurry and scurry –
ASAP – Always Say a Prayer.

In the midst of family chaos,
“Quality time” is rare.
Do your best; let God do the rest –
ASAP – Always Say a Prayer.

It may seem like your worries
Are more than you can bear.
Slow down and take a breather –
ASAP – Always Say a Prayer.

God knows how stressful life is,
He wants to ease our cares,
And He'll respond to all your needs
ASAP – Always Say a Prayer.

Ministry To Muslims

Missionary Hicham Chehab shared his testimony on Thursday evening (April 19, 2007) to a standing room only audience on the Campus of Elmhurst College. In the audience of more than 100 students, staff, and interested public were several Lutheran pastors, more than fifteen Muslims, and several who had traveled more than two hours to attend.

At the end of the evening, after an extensive question and answer session, several Muslim student leaders thanked Hicham for his fair and balanced presentation and his responses during the Question & Answer section. A faculty observer commented, "Hicham did a wonderful job presenting the Gospel in a manner that was interesting for our students who were Christians and broke through to some of the Islamic community on campus."

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY for God's continued favor on Hicham's ministry. Pray especially against the obstacles arising from the Evil One. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare many more believers to proclaim with boldness and courage the reality of GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS FOR ALL IN JESUS CHRIST.

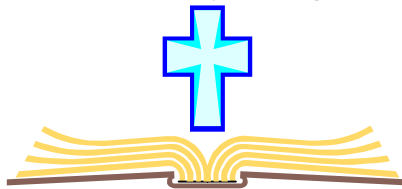
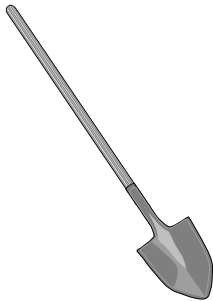
From the Ethnic Ministries Network of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Northern Illinois District Online Community.

Quest for Truth

Jesus: the Way, the Truth, the Life.

Join our Vacation Bible School

Are you ready for a journey?
Have fun finding an artifact to fit.
Searching for evidence is key.
Can you dig it?



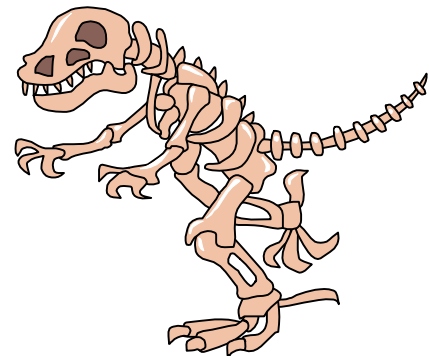
Come learn about Jesus while having fun.
We look forward to meeting you.
Just bring yourself, a friend if you can and your enthusiasm.

When: July 9th – 13th.

Where: Faith Lutheran Church
9701 S. Melvina
Oak Lawn, IL.

Time: 9:30AM – 12:00 PM Noon

Who: Children age 3 yrs. old – 8th Grade



For more information contact Faith Church at 708-424-1059