

FAITH NEWSLETTER

June / July. 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Friday morning Bible Class has been reading Pr. Matthew Harrison's *A Little Book on Joy*. The chapter we read together last week began like this:



Once a man said to me, "Pastor, I wouldn't join that church of yours for anything. They're all a bunch of hypocrites!" I responded, "True. And there's always room for one more." Quite despite itself, its shortcomings, its mistakes and sins (and in many ways precisely because of such things), the Church is a community of joy. The secret to living a good news life in a bad news world is learning both to lay down our burdens upon Christ and the gathered community (the Church), and, in turn, to take up the burdens of others gathered there.

Pr. Harrison writes that the church is a "community of joy." Is that how you think of our congregation? Are we a community of joy?

Being a community of joy does not mean having a church full of people with perfect lives. Far from it. The church is full of sinners. The church is full of hypocrites and liars. People at church will distract you, annoy you, and disappoint you.

Taking up one another's burdens does not just mean visiting people when they're sick, comforting those who mourn, or taking up a collection when their bills start to pile up. Taking up another's burdens means loving and forgiving your fellow sinners in the body of Christ, especially the fellow members of this congregation.

The burden that Christ bore for all of us was the cross. He died in our place. That's where forgiveness comes from. That's where joy comes from. But that forgiveness doesn't stop with you. That joy doesn't stop with you. True joy comes not just from receiving the good gifts from Jesus, but in passing those along to the other sinners in your life.

The main place where this forgiveness and joy come to us is in the Lord's Supper. When you join with your fellow Christians around the Lord's Table, you come bearing their burdens and forgiving their sins. Luther puts it like this:

Whoever is in despair, distressed by a sin-stricken conscience or carrying some other burden upon his heart, if he would be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar and lay down his woe in the midst of the community and seek help from the entire company of the spiritual body ... The immeasurable grace and mercy of God are given us in this sacrament to the end that we might put from us all misery and lay it upon the community, and especially on Christ. Then we may with joy find strength and comfort.

Our congregation is a community of joy as we gather around the Lord's Table, leaving there our burdens, both upon Christ and upon one another, and there receive forgiveness, both from Christ and from one another. If you're looking for true joy, come to the Sacrament (and Bible Class on Friday morning, too).

Joy!

Pastor Mark Birkholz

In and Around Faith Church

Ladies Aid

Our ladies have had a busy Spring. We thank all who helped make the Rummage sale a success. Through our endeavors we were able to support several Faith projects. We donated \$300 to the Food Pantry for Easter hams, we helped financially with a maintenance project at the parsonage and we are donating \$600 so Faith Church can again run a summer Vacation Bible School.

We will have our next meeting Thursday, June 3rd at 6:30 PM. This will be our annual pizza and bunco evening. All ladies are invited, but please let Mary Slepski or Gail Henson know if you will attend, so we can plan accordingly.

Enjoy the summer and we will see you Thursday Sept 9th. Chairman Kathleen Nowak

White Sox Outing

Once again Ed Neaves has planned an evening with the White Sox.

The date is July 31st with a 6:05PM game start and fireworks afterward. Tickets will be available on a first come basis.

We will depart on the Pace Bus at 95th and 52nd Ave. at 4:05PM and return there after fireworks.

Please contact Ed Neaves for more information.

Church Picnic

The Church Picnic is Sunday June 20th at Wolfe Wildlife Preserve, 109th and Laramie.

We know it is Father's Day so bring Dad, Grandpa and the kids. Mom's you won't have to cook. Hot dogs and soda will be provided so just bring a dish for the common table.

Worship will be at 9:00AM at Faith for those not attending the picnic, and at 11:00AM we will have a service at the picnic with lunch to follow.

There will be games for the kids and Bingo for the adults. Please bring a wrapped \$5.00 gift as a Bingo prize.

Join us for a day of fellowship and fun!

VBS

Our theme this year is "Heroes of the Bible".

Make plans for a wonderful week of VBS fun. Our kick off will be the church picnic on Sunday June 20th at Wolfe Wildlife Refuge 109th and Laramie at 11:00AM. VBS will be the week of June 21st 9:30 noon.

Come join us for Bible stories, games, crafts and of course snacks. Gather your friends, relatives, and neighbors. Help us share the word of God.

Anyone interested in helping out please contact Celeste Oslakovic, the church office, or Pastor.

It's not just the kids that have all the fun.

New Members

Mary Dwyer comes to Faith from just around the corner on Moody Ave. She first visited our congregation when she was looking for a place to donate food. Mary was baptized on Easter Sunday and confirmed on April 25. She is already active with the Friday Bible Class and continues to help with the Food Pantry.

Jim Kramer started attending Faith last year during Holy Week. Jim joined Faith by confirmation on April 25. He also lives in Oak Lawn and runs his own electronics business, specializing in copiers and printers. Jim regularly attends Sunday morning Bible Class and often asks very insightful questions. Jim is also a musician and is looking forward to assisting with Faith's music ministry.

Bob and Eleonore Lang have come back to our congregation, joining by Profession of Faith on April 25. Bob is a retired truck driver, and Eleonore is a nurse. The Langs enjoy camping and spend much of the summer in Wisconsin.

Weddings

Please keep these young people in your prayers as they prepare to be joined in Holy Matrimony:

Matt Owen and Lisa Machtan (June 12)

Matt Spangler and Kristen Stroh (June 12)

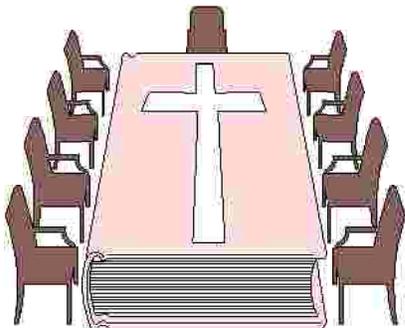
Andrew Rex and Amy Lassandrello (June 19)

Schedule of June / July. 2010 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>June Event</u>
5	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
6	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
13	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
19	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
20	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	11:00 AM	Worship at Picnic
27	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

Evening with Jesus	3rd Thurs. 6:00 PM
Afternoon Worship	2nd Tues. 1:00 PM
AA Groups	M & F - 6:00 PM Sat - 8:00 AM
Bible Study	Fri. - 10:30 AM
Girl Scouts	Tu - 3:30 PM F - 6:30 PM
ALANON	Tu - 7:30 PM
Ladies Aid	(First) - Th. - 7:00 PM
Adventure	(First) - Sun. - 7:00 PM



<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>July Event</u>
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
25	9:00 AM	Worship / Children's Msg.
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Guest Preacher

The Rev. Dan Gilbert will be our guest preacher at the Divine Service on June 6.

Pastor Gilbert is President of the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS, which includes 223 congregations spread over 24 counties in northern Illinois. He has served in this position since 2006, and was reelected to a second three year term last summer. Prior to serving as District President, President Gilbert served at Cross Lutheran in Yorkville, IL.

President Gilbert will also lead the Bible Class hour immediately following the service on June 6. It will be a privilege to host President Gilbert, and we hope you are able to join us.

Faith Young Adults BBQ

We will be having a barbeque for the young adults at Faith (ages 18 - 35) on Sunday, June 14, from 4:00PM to 7:00PM. Drinks and meat will be provided; please bring a snack or dessert to share.

Please RSVP by Sunday June 6 to
pastor@faithoaklawn.org
 or call (708) 857-7256



June / July. Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

June Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

June 6 Bill Weems
Alden Ketchum
Nick Trojanowski
Mark Trojanowski

June 13 Frank Oslakovic
Gene Osmanski
Glenn Werth
Ray Bennett

June 20 Ed Neaves
Mary Slepski
Gail Henson

June 27 Richard Clark
Bill Weems
A.J. Bray
Howard Johnson

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

June 6 Bill Weems

June 13 Jim Kramer

June 20 Debbie Hochgesang

June 27 Ray Bennett

July Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

July 4 Gene Osmanski
Alden Ketchum
Glenn Werth
Ray Bennett

July 11 Frank Oslakovic
Nick Trojanowski
Mark Trojanowski

July 18 Richard Clark
Ed Neaves
Howard Johnson
A.J. Bray

July 25 Bill Weems
Gail Henson

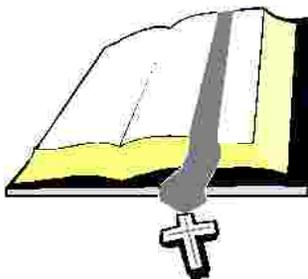
Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

July 4 Gene Osmanski

July 11 Nick Trojanowski

July 18 Ed Neaves

July 25 Gene Osmanski



Serving Seniors

The Three Friars:

When Betty Baker moved to Brighton Gardens, she wanted one thing - a Lutheran church service. After contacting Pastor Birkholz and Pastor Matt Gunia (Trinity, Burr Ridge), they coordinated with Pastor Bill Orr (Grace, Willow Springs) and Mr. Craig Chidester to find a way to provide pastoral care to the residents of Brighton Gardens.

Beginning in September of last year, these three pastors, nicknamed "The Three Friars" began holding regular services at Brighton Gardens. This service quickly grew from 16 to over 30 in attendance. They also decided to provide birthday cards for all the residents and to hold special holiday services for Christmas and Easter. Members of these pastors' congregations frequently come to assist with the regular services. Those from Faith who have helped out include Arlene Banks, Amberleigh Birkholz, Zachary Birkholz, Debbi Hochgesang, Erma Johnson, Max Radosevich, Joyce Stroh, Barbara Tebo, and Lois Werth.

Soon word spread and more senior homes were asking if services could be held for their residents also. At this point services are coordinated for four homes in the area:

Briar Place Nursing Center in Indian Head Park – Mondays
Brighton Gardens of Burr Ridge – Wednesdays
The Birches Assisted Living in Clarendon Hills – Wednesdays (starting in July)
Cordia Senior Residence in Westmont – Thursdays

All services start at 10:30 am and last from 30 to 45 minutes. Pastor Birkholz regularly leads services at Brighton Gardens, but has filled in at Briar Place and Cordia on occasion. You are invited to come and help out as often as you are able.

One of the staff members at Brighton Gardens wrote a very nice thank you note, expressing how grateful everyone there has been for these services. You can read this note on the following page.

Tinley Court:

Pastor Water Ledogar of Christ, Orland Park, has been coordinating services at Tinley Court Retirement Community for many years, where Hertha Fahlberg resides. This year Pastor Birkholz was invited to join with four other area pastors in providing services at this facility. Many members of Faith have also helped with this service, including Arlene Banks, Amberleigh Birkholz, Zachary Birkholz, Marilyn Diehl, Debbi Hochgesang, Marge Ketchum and Erma Johnson. Services are held on Wednesdays at 3:30pm.

Schedule for June and July

Brighton Gardens:

June 2, 10:30a

July TBD

Tinley Court:

June 2, 3:30p

July 21, 3:30p

May 4, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The residents of Sunrise Brighton Gardens of Burr Ridge, their families, and I like to thank you for your selfless giving of time, effort, and care of your Lutheran church. Your Christian love shines through your faithful volunteers, and warms the heart of my residents.

Your Wednesday Service has been a long awaited and welcomed event at our facility. Many residents have come early in the week in anticipation church, or when we greet each other, I am asked, "How many days until church?" You are filling a much needed ministry at Brighton.

The Birthday Card ministry is also such a wonderful way to reach out to my residents. Many have no family, or are, sadly, forgotten. You have brought joy to my residents faces – and their hearts.

The Easter Service was beautiful. Brighton Gardens was blessed to have the Lutheran Church service. Your church was the only denomination who came to serve the generation of people who not only value church, they long for it.

Your volunteers are so loving and friendly. The residents wait for you with great anticipation. These residents are from all denominations. It has been a joy to see them come together as one through church.

The outpouring of Christ's love shines though the volunteers who could not come to help during the service through the Cookie Ministry. It was a thoughtful way to make my residents feel at home. My thanks to all those who served my residents one by one. I don't believe they know what an impact they made by the giving of themselves. May God bless them.

The volunteers. They are a wonderful, caring, friendly and patient gathering of saints showing Jesus' love in action. Thank you to the Three Friars, Craig, Jack, Cindy, Dorothy, Herb and Ginny, the Gunia family, Lilly, Sue and Eve. Forgive me if I did not mention a name. God knows. That is what is important.

May God bless your church and those who serve Him.

Love in Christ!

Laurie Dorgan
Activity Assistant

"I thank my God every time I remember you." (Philippians 1:3)

Why Lutherans Do What We Do

How many Lutherans does it take to change a lightbulb?

None. Lutherans don't believe in change. It's not that we're inflexible when it comes to change. It's just that we put our hope in someone who does not change - God. His love, His grace and His word are eternal.

The editor of the indispensable Lutheran Handbook series Kristofer Skrade and the Rev. Todd Wilken, host of the Lutheran radio show Issues, Etc. shed some light on the why Lutherans...

1. Sit in the back of the church and /or protect our pew like it's reserved seating at a rock concert.

Staking out the back row facilitates a quick escape. Plus Lutherans are leery of being too devout. We have a proper understanding of our sin, so we shy away from the holy things up front says Wilken. As to pews, Skrade believes we get into ruts that are unrelated to holy rituals.

2. Reprint the entire worship service in a bulletin when we have hymnals.

Count this habit as an evangelism tool: The hymnal is a Lutheran legacy, but these days we understand that it can be intimidating to guests. Skrade says, "A huge bulletin may be wordy, but it's easier to navigate.

3. Consider our main form of socialization the pot luck - with mandatory Jell-O®.

The potluck, a long-standing tradition among Lutherans, is an opportunity for the same kind of table fellowship Jesus practiced throughout his ministry. "Recipes make good conversation and that sharing is community building," Skrade says. Wilken believes Lutherans understand that food is a good gift of God. "If God gave it to us, why not enjoy it, and why not all together in the church basement?" (The Jell-O® dessert is just a bonus.)

4. Consider it a badge of honor to show as little emotion as possible.

Our Lutheran ancestors were from northern Europe, where the cold climate made stoicism a survival tool. "When things get bad, Lutherans say, 'Well, it could be worse.' And when things go really well, we don't say anything, because we're afraid to jinx it, Skrade says. "You can't waste energy celebrating, because there's work to do."

5. Approach the church's spending with a careful eye, but often give anonymously to those in need.

We take pride in our thriftiness, which extends to getting full use out of every penny for God's church, too. "There's not a penny to be wasted, and if we as a faith community can get by with an unheated building and secondhand hymnals, then we'll get by. It's almost a point of pride," Skrade says. But Lutherans aren't stingy: "We're certainly frugal, but when Lutherans see someone in need, they're incredibly generous," Wilken says. "The more someone gives, the less they want anyone to know about it."

6. Live our faith all day and all week, even in our work.

Luckily for those of us who aren't church workers, Lutherans believe in the doctrine of vocation – that is, every job performed by a Christian is a call to serve others, not just that of a pastor. Luther once wrote, “the Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.” The idea isn't new – Paul said as much in 1 Corinthians 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

7. Avoid saying hello to new people in church.

Again, our wallflower tendencies surface here. We're ly afraid of this conversation: “Hi, welcome to our church.” “Umm, I've been here for 30 years.” “Oh. Skrade says that in the small northern European communities of our ancestors and even in the first Lutheran communities in the U.S. everybody knew everyone else. “Welcoming strangers was an underdeveloped muscle,” he explains. “It's hard to overestimate just how strong our habits really are.”

8. Volunteer endlessly even though we believe we're saved by grace alone.

One of the main tenets of Lutheranism is found in the fourth article of the Augsburg Confession, which says we are saved by grace – through faith in Christ – not by works. When we feed on God's word, the natural result is service to our neighbor,” Wilken says. “What Jesus did for us, He did willingly. We in turn serve freely and willingly, ‘in fervent love toward one another,’ because everything in the church is free – the grace of God and service to our neighbor.”

9. Pass the peace when secretly we feel that shaking and / or hugging our neighbor in church is too intimate.

Passing the peace is an ancient Christian tradition that has survived in the Lutheran church, even if it's “the most uncomfortable 25 seconds of Sunday morning,” Wilken says. “Sunday morning worship isn't a spectator sport. We are there and bound together in unity by the word and the sacrament, a bond closer than any handshake or hug can communicate.” Skrade says it's more than just your weekly chance to say hello to someone. “Passing the peace can be disarming and uncomfortable, but it's an opportunity for a literal connection with you neighbor during corporate worship instead of being in your own mental silo,” Skrade says. “It's part of the glue that holds the community together.”

10. Baptize babies.

When many Lutherans are baptized as babies, it's actually a nondiscriminatory practice: “We baptize sinners.” Wilken says, as Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19 (Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit”). We're not stingy with grace. Luther taught that if grace is available, everyone ought to get it...including babies.