

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

Keep Alert! Watch!

Jesus said, "Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back . . . If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" (Mark 13:33-37)

It's a hot time of the year, so ice cream trucks are out. Maybe you've heard their familiar jingle coming down your street.

If you have young children, ice cream trucks pose a couple of challenges. First, you must watch for the truck in your neighborhood so you don't miss it and disappoint your kids. Second, you have to keep alert for the danger that the truck poses. If your child runs out into the street after an ice cream truck, the results could be deadly. Keep alert! Watch!

God also tells us to keep watch. Once Jesus told a story that explained the meaning of God's command to stay alert. He described a wealthy man heading away from his home on a journey. He has an order for the doorkeeper, "Stay alert!" The man at the gate must keep watching because he doesn't know when the owner of the house will return.

In the same way, we don't know when Jesus will come back from heaven. When He does, He is going to welcome those who are prepared for Him. How do we prepare for His return? The one thing that prepares us for Jesus is faith. And faith comes by hearing and learning the good news of the salvation that Jesus accomplished for us.

Jesus came to die for the sinful things we have done. If you saw a neighbor's child zooming heedlessly into the street, would you send your son into the street to get in the way of the oncoming ice cream truck--dooming your son, to save the other child?

What if that child had regularly disrespected you? Would you give up your own son for such a defiant one? God did. He had His holy Son die in place of those who have disobeyed Him -- all of us. When He successfully completed the work of salvation, Jesus returned to heaven. He promised that one day He will return to take all of His believers home with Him.

Watch! Jesus is coming. To ignore His Word and live in unbelief will result in a horrid separation from God. Keep alert! Waiting for Him in faith brings a luscious treat that couldn't be cooler or sweeter.

SYNOD NEWS

The 60th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held July 27-31 at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw. Approximately 400 delegates from across the Synod will gather in the Word to celebrate God's blessings on ministry in the past and set in motion an agreed-upon plan of ministry for the future. Challenges facing the delegates will be how to address a CMO (Congregational Mission Offering) that is 3.8% less than it was last year and a recently announced cutback in gifts of \$800,000 by the Schwann Corporation. In his most recent report to the members of WELS, President Schroeder said the following:

"Much of our attention and discussion in recent months has been focused on financial matters. We dare not allow these financial challenges -- and the planning they require -- to distract us from keeping our eyes of faith focused on our Savior and on the mission he has given us to do. May God move us to plan wisely, to consider the costs, and then to move forward in faith and trust. I ask that you join the SC in praying for God's blessings on our efforts, and that you continue to keep your congregation informed about these important matters in the weeks ahead."

Pastor Dan Voigt from Mt. Olive in Tulsa, as well as a lay delegate from Mt. Olive, will represent our District at the convention. Pray for them and for our Synod

PRAYER LIST

"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

- First of all let us all give thanks to the Lord that the Lord in His wisdom chose to take Richard Masucci home to Himself. Please pray for his wife, Anna, that she will find comfort and peace for her aching heart in the loving arms of Jesus. We also praise the Lord for special blessings that God gave to them this last month.

- We rejoice that God brought Andrea Smith through her surgery and has given her the strength to once

again come back to our spiritual family and worship with us.

- We rejoice with Ricky Poulin that he finished his Bible information course and was confirmed in the faith.

- We rejoice that Skyla Barnett's brain scans proved negative.

- We rejoice with Gerry and Mary Cartwright on their 48th wedding anniversary, with Pastor and Barbara for their 35th wedding anniversary, for the 39th wedding anniversary of Tom and Janet Finney, and for the 54th wedding anniversary of Karen and Marlon Henry.

- We praise the Lord for giving the Eisenbeis family a brand new healthy boy, Henry, and for bringing him into God's kingdom through Holy Baptism.

- We thank our God that Roberta Beckelman's medical tests turned out negative.

Let us pray also for those who are facing deep challenges:

- Please pray again for the fiancé's daughter of Gerry and Mary Cartwright's daughter, who is on life support in Germany after having been severely wounded in Afghanistan.

- Pray for Latischa Huller, and her baby, who is having some complications.

- Pray also for Charlotte Glass who just had a cancerous kidney removed.

- Please pray for our soldiers. Roberta Beckelman requests that you would pray for her family members: Craig Rawleigh, Eric Sidio and Doug Huggin who are serving in the military.

Lord, for these and all other prayers You would have us ask of You, grant them according to Your loving will, for the sake of Your Son Jesus. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP

The Bible is filled with a lot of examples of Christian Stewardship. Look at the list below and then at the end examine the conclusions that have been drawn from these passages:

> **Genesis 4:3-5** - *In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.*

> **Genesis 8:20-21** - *Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man."*

> **Genesis 22:2** - *Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."*

> **Hebrews 11:4** - *By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings ... 17 - By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 - even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 - Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*

> **Exodus 18:12** - *Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God.*

> **Job 1:5** - *When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.*

> **Exodus 8:8** - *Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."*

Observations

1. God's people desire to thank God for what He had given them even without His command.

- For preserving them

- For protecting them

- For promising a Savior

2. God wants us to give our best.

- In times of prosperity

- In times of poverty

3. God wants His people to give to Him.

- Humbly to our superior God
 - Freely without expecting anything in return
 - Completely with sacrifice
4. God is not pleased with every gift and offering.
- He looks at the heart
 - He looks for our best

OUTREACH

Is there a name you'd like to see in the Book of Life?

The Bible says that the only people who will go to heaven are those whose names are written in "The Book of Life" (Revelation 20). Such names are added to the Book of Life when, through the Word or Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit leads people to trust in Jesus as their personal savior.

Maybe you know someone who currently does not confess faith in Jesus or is not active in a Christian congregation. Maybe you are concerned about a loved one whose name may not yet be written in the Book of Life. Is there anything you can do for that person? Yes, there is. You can:

Pray - Ask God to work faith in that person's heart, through the testimony of yourself and others.

Witness - Look for opportunities to talk to them about Jesus, your faith, Christian hope, answers to prayer, etc.

Invite - Ask people to accompany you to a worship service, Bible class, or church activity where they can be introduced to Holy Cross and other Christian friends. Show them our church web sites and listen to some sermons with them.

Write - Put your friend on a mailing list. Send them *Forward In Christ* magazine, *Meditations* and other tracts. Give their name to the Outreach Board for a visit or to include them on an outreach mailing list.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Holy Cross **Ricky Poulin!** Ricky was born in 1987 here in Oklahoma City. He became a member of Holy Cross last month after attending a Bible Information Class by Pastor. For Ricky, Holy Cross has always been his family, the only church home he has ever had. Some of his early memories of Holy Cross were a couple of Christmas programs he was able to be a part of. Ricky has never had a father, so Octavio Mesquita and Butch Barnett took him in and gave him the guidance a father normally would have offered. The members of the church always made him feel at home. Finally, it was at the urging of Paul Barnett and Butch Barnett that Ricky decided to take the class necessary for membership.

Ricky was given his first job by Octavio Mesquita and learned from him how to be a grounds keeper at apartment complexes. He works at one in the downtown area.

We appreciate you Ricky, and praise the Lord that you have been led by Him to commit yourself to membership at Holy Cross. We pray that you will grow in faith and in the knowledge of the Word. May your stay with us be a mutual blessing!

We would like to welcome new members **Christian Eisenbeis**, his wife, **Leah** and their children, **Flora** and **Henry**. We pray that God will bless you here in Oklahoma and that He will also bless us through you.

Christian was born in Rhinelander, WI on June 30, 1979, and grew up as a member of the ELS (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) in Egan, MN. His dad was an engineer and his mom a day care provider. As a child he attended a WELS Christian day school and went on to graduate in 1997 from St. Croix Lutheran High School in West St. Paul, MN. Pastor Huebner, a former pastor of Holy Cross taught him his 11th and 12th grade religion classes. In 2000 he graduated from the U. of Minnesota with a BA in Russian. Christian got interested in Russian when his parents gave him a present at the age of 12 called the *Twelve Chairs*. The story line of the movie was based on the Soviet Union in 1927. He used his degree by teaching it at the U. of Chicago while he was getting his Masters in Slavic Linguistics (Polish, Czech, and Bulgarian).

Since his confirmation he has always wanted to be a pastor with a specific interest in being a

missionary to Eastern Europe. He enrolled at Bethany Lutheran College (ELS in Mankato, MN) in 2005. In August of 2007 he was called to Plzen in the Czech Republic through an ELS mission society called "Thoughts of Faith." He was to vicar there and then continue as a full time missionary. He came back in February of 2008 due to visa problems and spent his vicar year at a parish in Waukon, IA, called King of Grace. He graduated from Bethany Lutheran Seminary in June of this year. Because of a lack of parishes available for graduates in the ELS, Christian found a job as a Norman police, fire and ambulance dispatcher.

Leah, Christian's wife, was born on July 27, 1981. She graduated from 8th grade at Christ Lutheran Christian Day School in St. Paul, and from St. Croix Lutheran High School in St. Paul. She received her degree in English at the U. of Minnesota in 2002 and taught a semester of English at Bethany Lutheran College. After marrying Christian, she received her Master's Degree in Book Arts from the U. of Alabama. Book Arts deals with everything you need to know to make books. Both Leah and Christian like to read and write books, especially children's books. They get to use their books with their children Flora, born in February of 2007, and Henry born in June of 2009.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Education/Norman Mission/Relocation Renovation Committees met jointly and gave the Board of Steward-ship the following recommendations to be presented at the Voters' Body Meeting on July 26th:

1. The Board of Stewardship will recommend that a Norman Mission church be started in January 2010. The Finance Committee is asked to designate \$500 per month in the 2010 budget to support this mission outreach in addition to a Norman Mission fund which will be started immediately to support this effort;
2. The Board of Stewardship will recommend that monies from the Church Renovation/Expansion Fund be used to immediately start renovation on the narthex, bathrooms, kitchen and fellowship area, with construction on a new education building to be begin in two to three years, a "west wing" with offices and restrooms to begin in five years, and construction on a new sanctuary to begin in ten years; and
3. The board of Stewardship recommends that the Education Committee study the feasibility of starting a Mother's Day Out/Pre-School following the construction of the new education building.

VOTERS' MEETING

The Quarterly Voters' Body Meeting is scheduled for July 26th, following a pot luck dinner. The August newsletter will be printed and distributed prior to the meeting. The September newsletter will contain the results of the meeting. Main items on the meeting agenda will be the committee recommendations (see the article in this newsletter titled "Committee Reports") presented by the Board of Stewardship, and the purchase of playground equipment for the church grounds. Board reports and membership business will also be part of the meeting agenda.

BUS TRIP TO A SILVER MINE IN KANSAS

Quite a few members have signed up to take an all-day bus tour a silver mine in Kansas. There should be lots of fun and fellowship for young and old. The group leaves this Wednesday morning. If you want to go, sign the list on the bulletin board today or call Susan Piña at 741-1686.

WORSHIP

Why does the pastor face the altar at certain times and at other times the congregation?

Lutheran public worship is a divine dialogue of God with His people. There is a sacramental element; when God speaks and gives to us. There is also a sacrificial element; when we speak and give to God.

Whenever the pastor reaches a section in the service where God speaks to us, as in the reading of Scriptures, the pronouncement of absolution for sin, the blessings, etc., the pastor FACES THE CONGREGATION as a symbol of that fact. Whenever the pastor reaches a section where we speak to God, as in prayer and praise, he joins with the congregation in FACING THE ALTAR. Because he speaks for God and for a group of people, he covers his own personality with a gown or alb. The point is to emphasize the message - not the man. He is a voice of one heralding the Word of God.

HOLY CROSS WEB SITE

To reach out to its members in the congregation and to the world, Holy Cross has three different web

site addresses – www.holycrossokc.org, www.holycrossokc.com, and www.holycrosstoday.com. The web sites contain each Sunday's sermons and scripture readings, along with the newsletter, calendar, activities and other doctrinal information. Also included are links to Synod's web site and other sites with doctrinal messages. In this manner Holy Cross is reaching out to its members and the world with God's Word. So everyone is encouraged to use the Holy Cross web sites to obtain information pertaining to God's Word and His Work.

SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS

Please continue to bring your Campbell Soup labels and box top coupons and give them to Dina Shoumaker.

MY JESUS

By Barb's mother, Delores Staats

*My Jesus lived and died for me!
Let this my strength forever be
When daily conflicts vex my soul;
When sin and grief would take it's toll;
Then turn my weary eyes to see
The one who lived and died for me!
I asked God's Spirit to impart
This precious truth upon my heart;
That Christ's own perfect life is mine;
I'm clothed in Righteousness divine!
In this array I know I'll be
Absolved for all eternity!*

*Oh, fill my heart with grateful praise
That I may tell throughout my days
The wonders of His special grace
Who came to earth to take my place;
Fulfilled the Law and paid my price
By His atoning sacrifice!*

*My Jesus died and rose for me!
Let this my song of triumph be;
That now my sins are all forgiv'n
And I at last can enter heav'n
Where I shall see Him face to face
To praise Him for His wondrous grace!*

CLASSIC CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

1. The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
2. The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.
3. Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7p.m. Please use the back door.
4. Ushers will eat latecomers.
5. The Rev. Merriweather spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

6. The Pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy."
7. The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
8. The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.
9. 22 members were present at the church meeting held at the home of Mrs. Marsha Crutchfield last evening. Mrs. Crutchfield and Mrs. Rankin sang a duet, The Lord Knows Why.
10. Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.

AUGUST GREETERS

- Aug. 2 - Byron & Dina Shoumaker
- Aug. 9 - Craig Ballinger & Andrea Smith
- Aug. 16 - Shawn & Charity Stuever
- Aug. 23 - Paul & Aimee Barnett
- Aug. 30 - Tom & Georgia Bigaouette

AUGUST CLEANING LIST

- Aug. 1 - Jack & LaVon Post/Andy & Jeanie Quam
- Aug. 8 - Scott & Carole Peters/Byron & Dina Shoumaker
- Aug. 15 - George Bradshaw/Debbie Korff
- Aug. 22 - Don & Darlene Chaddock/Patti Buczynskyj
- Aug. 29 - Bill & Fran Shoumaker/Cheryl Littlejohn

AUGUST MOWING LIST

- Aug. 1 - Tom Finney/Kris Timm
- Aug. 8 - Scott Peters & Sons
- Aug. 15 - Jack Post/Andy Quam
- Aug. 22 - Bill Shoumaker/Byron Shoumaker
- Aug. 29 - Robert Barnett/Butch Barnett