

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

Time To Grow

Jesus said, "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times" (Mark 4:3-8).

Songwriters have used it. Thinkers have used it. Investors have used it. You probably have used it yourself. Even Jesus Christ used it. Used what? They used the picture of planting seeds to make a point. Jesus told a story about planting seeds. Recorded for us in Mark 4:3-8, this simple story speaks volumes for our lives.

Jesus teaches us that seeds are being planted in hearts at worship services each Sunday. That's also what is happening in a children's Sunday school lesson--seeds are being planted in their hearts. That's what is happening when you learn what the Bible teaches--seeds are being planted in your own heart. They are being planted by God through His Word.

Seeds need time to grow. In springtime when gardens are first planted, there's not much to see. Yet, as every gardner knows, when it comes to seeds, it takes time. As sunlight warms the moist earth where seeds are imbedded, seeds take time to sprout and grow.

Sometimes a person checks out a church one Sunday and decides not to go back. But that's not much time to let the seeds sown that Sunday grow, is it? Sometimes people are glad to attend a particular Bible class or workshop at a church. But when it is done, they lose interest. In a way, they are like a child who excitedly plants a seed in a foam cup and waters it regularly. But a couple of days later the child forgets about it, and the seed dries up.

Sometimes a person goes to worship regularly so that the seeds of God's Word start to grow, but then he lets the cares of life grow up like thorns. They crowd out time for the Word, and so the planting of faith in his soul gets the life choked out of it.

But sometimes an amazing thing happens. The person keeps coming back to hear the Word. And the seeds grow. And keep growing. The plant of faith is made strong by God's complete forgiveness won by Jesus. It flourishes under God's unconditional love given in Jesus and is made resilient by heaven's guarantee paid for by Jesus.

Maybe that person is you.

PRAYER LIST

Psalm 28:6 - *"Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy."*

Please remember to pray for:

- * Joy and Gary Hahn. Joy's father, Marvin Stone, went in for heart tests and is not doing well. Gary had several arteries unplugged in preparation for hip surgery at a later date. Ask that if it is God's will, Gary will get better and be drawn closer to his Lord and that Gary will gain the health he needs to be able to have the hip surgery.
- * Thad Schnell and his wife had their first baby and named him Hayden. Please rejoice with the family and thank the Lord for His goodness. Please also pray that Hayden will soon be brought into God's kingdom through Holy Baptism.
- * Linda Taha's aunt died last month. She and John went back east for the funeral. Please pray that God would comfort them through the Gospel message of Christ's love and resurrection.
- * Please thank the Lord that Jimmy Schnell has recovered some of his strength. He and Natalie still need a lot of our prayers. There are many problems affecting their family. Please pray that the surgeries on his fingers and hand are successful.
- * Praise the Lord for the blessings He has given Byron and Dina Shoumaker during their last ten

years of married life. Ask, if it is His will, that they may have many more years together to serve the Lord.

* Pastor Paul Johnston's brother had surgery for prostate cancer. His wife is in treatment for breast cancer. They need your prayers. Please pray that Pastor Johnston is comforted with God's Word as he wrestles with this family issue.

* Janice, sister of Janet Finney, is not doing well after surgery. Ask the Lord that her health issues will be resolved according to God's gracious and good will.

* Please remember Vicar Tom Strackbein in your prayers as he begins his vicar's duties at Grace Lutheran Church, Prairie Due Chien, WI. Ask that the Lord will bless Vicar Strackbein with all the talents and desires necessary to carry on His work.

* Please pray for the missionaries that will be coming home soon after the last round of budget cuts. Please pray that the fields they leave behind will be protected against false shepherds and teachings. Please also thank the Lord that Missionary Philip's termination was rescinded and that he will continue to serve on LATTE (Latin American Traveling Theological Educators) team!

* Please remember our veterans and their families in your prayers. Thank the Lord for individuals such as these who serve in our military forces around the world. Ask that He will protect them from harm and danger and give strength to their families during their absence.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School will be from June 15-19, 6:30-8:30PM. The theme will be *"Dive In"* and will use different sea creatures to illustrate the point of each day's lesson.

Day 1 - Genesis 3 - "God Promises A Savior From Sin"

Day 2 - Matthew 4:1-11 - "Jesus Says No To the Devil"

Day 3 - Gospels - "The Savior Dies and Comes Back To Life"

Day 4 - Exodus 14-17 - "God Protects His People"

Day 5 - 1 Samuel 18 & 19 - "Jonathan Serves God by Helping David"

Make plans now and think about which friends you will want to invite. If there is enough interest, Pastor will present a Bible Study for adults on how to train children in the Lord.

VBS NEEDS

The Board of Education is recruiting helpers as VBS teachers and volunteers to bring snacks for the children. VBS will be June 15th-19th, 6:30-8:30PM. If you can help, please contact Don Chaddock at 485-2858.

For those who have children or grandchildren, please let Don Chaddock know if they will be attending VBS.

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

The Bible study was "What Is Prayer?" Prayer is to bring our hearts to God. Prayer is worship. Prayer is a heart-to-heart talk with God. Without Christian faith, no prayer will please God. Every time we praise we are praying. There are five basic kinds of prayer: adoration and praise, confession, thanksgiving, supplication and intercession.

Discussions and plans were made for various up-coming projects such as: ladies' luncheon, a day trip, movie night, church shower, and the confirmation class reception. See other articles in this edition of the newsletter for more details.

The next Mary-Martha meeting will be Saturday, September 12th at 9:30AM.

CONFIRMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Four students will be confirmed in the faith on Sunday, June 7th. **Troy Thomas, Peyton Buchanan, Everett Peters** and **Robbie Hahn** have completed two years of in-depth study of the Bible using Luther's Small Catechism and will share their knowledge with us during what

normally would have been the liturgy and sermon.

Confirmation is not a graduation, neither is it a sacrament. It is an opportunity for each confirmand to personally and publicly confess the faith that they received in Holy Baptism. It is also a time for each student to confess that their belief after careful study of the Bible, that the Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Synod and this congregation stand on the Bible as confessed by the Lutheran confessions. Based on that confession of unity they will be invited to participate regularly in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Please pray that each student will continue to study the Bible until the day God calls them home and that through the Word and Sacrament, God the Holy Spirit will keep them in the true faith. Keep praying for them throughout their teen years.

There will be a reception for them with cake and punch after the confirmation service.

SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS

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

STEWARDSHIP

Why do you give what you do to the Lord? Is it because it is your obligation as a member? Is it because if you don't we won't have enough to operate? Is it so you can feel good about yourself? Actually, according to the Bible, there is only one God pleasing motivational reason for living a Christian life of sanctification, which also includes the subject of giving. The God pleasing motive for God pleasing behavior is the love of God in Christ. Another word for that is the Gospel.

Look up the following passages:

Romans 12:1,2 - Gospel-motivated behavior is behavior that is a grateful response to the mercy of God.

1 John 4:19 - Gospel-motivated behavior is behavior that demonstrates love for God because He loved us first.

2 Corinthians 5:15 - Gospel-motivated behavior is behavior that lives for Christ because Christ died and rose for us.

For Reflection: (From President David Valleskey), "A Model First Century Stewardship Program."

1 - Agree or disagree? Christians give because they love Jesus? *First: Because Jesus loved me.*

2 - What would you say if you heard your pastor say with good reason in a sermon, "It's because of our greed and selfishness that we are running a deficit in our budget."? *Much better to say: "Our greed and selfishness are robbing God of what is due to him" (see Malachi 3:8,9).*

3 - What is a good way to respond to a person who says, "Christ said, 'Go and make disciples.' He didn't say, 'Go and raise money.'"? *Money is a means of exchange, making it possible for Christians to participate in mission work through the offerings they give to send missionaries and support them in their work.*

4 - Agree or disagree? "We need to avoid telling members to work **FOR** the church; we should be teaching them to work **AS** the church." *Agree: Christians are the church, not merely people who work for an organization. The church is the body of Christ. Each part needs to function (see 1 Cor. 12).*

5 - Agree or disagree? Christian stewardship does not consist in raising money, but in raising people. *Agree, in this sense: People need to be raised (that is, nurtured and strengthened in their faith); the giving of their offerings will then follow as a work pleasing to God.*

EVANGELISM

On Easter Sunday many of you made a real attempt to invite some of your friends to our

worship service. Many visitors did show up. If someone did come that is your friend, now would be a good time to ask them to come again. Be sure to sit with them and show them where to find everything in the liturgy. But what about those who didn't accept your invitation? Should we just quit and figure that there is no hope for them, that they are going to hell for sure and we might as well concentrate our time and energy on someone else? Don't be too hasty. There is almost always hope for a friend who is not a Christian or who is in danger of losing his/her faith because he/she is not connected to the Word of God and the sacraments. The hope will be there as long as there is the possibility of you or someone else sharing the life saving message of Jesus with that person. The hope ends when the time of grace for that person ends.

Do you need to be highly educated or specifically trained to share with a friend? The answer is no. Sharing your faith is simply a matter of living your faith in Jesus in **ACTIONS** and in **WORDS**. That is all the following people did. None of them at that time were specially trained. All of them had one thing in common. Jesus had touched their lives in a profound way and they were excited about it.

Mark 5:19 - Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

John 1:45 - Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:41-42 - The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

John 4:39 - Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me everything I ever did."

EDUCATION - SHOULD HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION HAVE AN EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY PROGRAM?

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus Christ has given the Great Commission to every Christian. We are all to "make disciples of all nations." Christians gather together in the name of the Triune God to strengthen each other in their faith and to more effectively baptize and teach others. This mission of the church is embedded in the programs and activities that each Christian congregation carries out.

A quality early childhood ministry can be an effective vehicle for bringing the Gospel message to families in our community. It can also assist families in and outside of our congregation to carry out the responsibility for the spiritual nurturing of their children.

Children are unique gifts from God. Each child has a spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, creative, and physical component. The first years of life are extremely important in a child's total development. The development of self-concept (understanding who they are) begins in the earliest years. The young child begins to identify him/herself as a unique creation of his/her Savior God.

The church reaches out to families as part of its natural ministry of outreach and nurture. The church reaches out with the message of God's love, help, care, and forgiveness for all. Ministry to families with young children is an important part of the church's overall Gospel ministry.

Throughout its history, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has demonstrated concern for children. In its early history, elementary schools and Sunday schools were established. Lutheran high schools followed and, more recently, early childhood ministries (ECM) have been established.

As parents enroll their children in an early childhood ministry, the church can offer opportunities for worship, personal contact, and the invitation to become part of a Christian

congregation that brings people into the arms of Jesus. Doors are opened to families with baptize and unbaptized children. The church can gain the opportunity to present the message of salvation and to lead parents and children to receive the blessings of Christ through baptism. Each believer can be provided the spiritual nurture opportunities to grow in his/her faith. A congregation's outreach ministry to families is, therefore, an integral part of its ministry to young children.

In July a vote will take place on whether Holy Cross could get involved in early childhood ministries. Talk to the committee members or Pastor if you have any questions about this mission possibility.

SUNDAY SERMONS

Would you like to review Pastor Strackbein's sermons during the week? If so, you can listen to each of Pastor's Sunday sermons and the Scripture readings on the www.holycrosstoday.com web page.

SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS SUMMER

Sunday School will continue during the summer but with a few new ideas. Once a month we will have it after church instead of before church. The first time will be on June 21st from 12:30-1:30PM. If the Kingspark swimming pool is finished with repairs, we will take the kids there from 2:00-4:00PM. If not, we will have fun activities for them during the same time period. On July 12th, we will do the same thing, except this time we will call it a Day Camp. Once again there will be no children's Sunday School in the morning. Instead, from 12:30-3:30PM we will offer an hour lesson and add to it crafts, singing and recess. The third time we will try this is on Sunday, August 2nd.

The adult Bible class will meet at the usual 9:15AM time.

MOVIE NIGHT

Due to the enthusiastic response from those attending the movie "Fireproof," another movie night has been scheduled at Holy Cross. The next movie will be June 12th at 7:00PM. This movie is titled, "Love Comes Softly." This movie is about a young woman on her way to a new life in the 1800's who suddenly finds herself a widow. Now she must live with a recently widowed young man and his daughter. Can any of them find love again? So, everyone come and enjoy a relaxing evening watching a movie with pop corn and cold drinks.

OUR WORSHIP

Last month, I began a series of explanatory articles which will deal with our worship, liturgy, church symbols and customs. Why do we do what we do? Today I would like to touch on the basics of Lutheran liturgical worship and what we hope to accomplish. To understand better the way we as WELS Lutherans worship, it is important to understand the way we view the Bible and Jesus Christ.

WELS Lutherans claim to teach exactly what the Bible says, no more and no less. We use the Bible the way God says He wants us to use it, with Jesus as the focal point of every word. Jesus said, *"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me"* (John 5:30). So, our worship involves heavy use of the Bible as did the worship of the early Christian church. Luke tells us in Act 2:42, *"They continually devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, (they are the ones whom God used to write the Scriptures), and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers."*

So how does that play out today? Well, in our worship we gather around the Word and the

Sacraments and in so doing gather around Jesus Himself. We do that so that we can hear the Word of God (the Apostles' teaching), celebrate the Sacrament (the breaking of bread), to pray together and finally to encourage each other (fellowship).

If you want to take it apart and see how it all fits together, open your hymnbook and examine carefully the way the words are written. As you do, you will find that there are two chief elements that involve a dialogue between a bride (the church) and the bridegroom (Christ). The two elements are:

1) Those sections where God is teaching or speaking to us (Scripture readings, sermon, sacraments, Biblical truths in hymns and liturgy, announcement of forgiveness, etc.); and

2) those sections where we speak to God, thanking and praising Him in response to His great love for us.

Usually, when God is speaking to us the Pastor faces the congregation. When he leads the response of the people, he shows it symbolically by facing the altar.

Because the focus is on Jesus and His Word and our response of gratitude for that love, WELS worship does not have entertainment, education, or counseling as its chief goal. Since we are in the presence of God Himself, listening and talking to Him, we worship with a sense of dignity and respect.

Pastor

SPECIAL OFFERING ENVELOPES

In the box of offering envelopes you received at the beginning of the year are envelopes titled "My Special Offering." There is an envelope for each month during the year. At the beginning of each year the Voters' Body of Holy Cross selects a special recipient for the offerings received in these envelopes during the year. For the year 2009 the Special Offering recipient is "Michigan Lutheran Seminary." If you would like to make an offering to the Michigan Lutheran Seminary, please use these envelopes.

COMMITTEE NEWS

The Renovation/Relocation, Education, and Norman Mission committees have completed their preliminary proposals which will be presented to the congregation following the pot luck dinner on Sunday, May 31st. Using the comments and survey information received at the meeting and following the meeting, the committees will reevaluate and finalize their proposals. The proposals will be given to the Board of Stewardship, who will evaluate the proposals and make recommendations to the Church Council. The Church Council will review the recommended proposals and submit them to the Voters' Body for adoption at the Voters' Body meeting on July 19th.

If you were unable to attend the congregational pot luck dinner presentation on May 30th to hear the committee proposals, you can see the slide presentations given by each committee on our web site at www.holycrosstoday.com. Also, following the worship services on June 7th and 14th, the survey form will be given to those not attending the pot luck presentation so everyone can provide their thoughts and ideas.

ATTENTION ALL LADIES

The Mary-Martha ladies will be having a luncheon at Johnny Carino's restaurant at I-240 & South Walker on Monday, June 8th at 11:00AM. All ladies of the congregation are invited. Please make plans to attend. If you are unable to attend, they will be having another luncheon in July. Details to follow.

ONE DAY BUS TRIP

A one day bus trip for members of Holy Cross has been scheduled for July 29th. The trip is to tour a working salt mine near Hutchinson, KS. A professional tour company will conduct the tour and provide the bus. Departure will be from Holy Cross at 7:00AM, returning about 7:00PM. Dining will be at an Amish restaurant and, of course, there will be stops for shopping. The cost of the trip, dining, and the mine ticket is \$72.00. To make reservations, please place your name on the sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board. Reservations will be accepted until July 1st. If you have questions, contact Sue Piña at 741-1686.

EVERYONE IS INVITED

WHAT?

Old fashioned house warming shower for Holy Cross

WHEN?

Friday, June 5 @ 7pm - come and go anytime

WHERE?

Holy Cross Lutheran Church - 1441 SW 104th St.

WHO?

All members and friends of Holy Cross congregation

Please bring a gift for the kitchen at Holy Cross. Some needs are: paper plates, plastic eating utensils, garbage bags (large/small for trash can), cups for hot/cold beverages, storage containers for leftovers after pot luck meals, cookie sheets, napkins, cleaning supplies, kitchen towels (cloth), dishcloths, or anything else you can think of.

When you wrap your gift, place a recipe card with your gift and we will share them with everyone. If you have any questions, please call Joyce at 912-3296.

MY HEAVENLY FATHER

By Delores Staats (Mother of Barbara Strackbein)

Help me to serve You, Lord, each day

In all I say and do.

Your Holy Word shall guide my way

And it will see me through.

Your willing servant I would be

For there is none so dear!

You graciously have died for me

To take away my fear!

So long my sins to me have been

A dreary, heavy load;

But You have come to rescue me

With Your almighty Word.

In pain and sorrow You have died

To take away my sin;

Your loving heart reached out to me

My stubborn heart to win.

For years I tried for sin to pay

With many works and deeds;

But found no comfort, peace or cheer

Or help for all my needs.

In great despair I cried to You

And You have heard my prayer,

*You showed through Your most Holy Word
That we may find You there.
A loving God You are to me,
A Father kind and true;
For Your dear Son has paid the price
Of all I could not do!
There is no sin, however great
That might not be forgiven;
It's only unbelief, alone,
That shuts the door to heaven.
Oh, grant me faith that I might see
This wondrous thing You've done!
Salvation full and free is given
Through Your beloved Son!*

JUNE GREETERS

June 7 - Don & Darlene Chaddock
June 14 - Tom & Janet Finney
June 21 - Marlon & Karen Henry
June 28 - Gene & Ada Hill

JUNE CLEANING LIST

June 6 - George Bradshaw/Debbie Korff
June 13 - Don & Darlene Chaddock/Patti Buczynskyj
June 20 - Shawn Stuever Family
June 27 - Duane & Sunny Stuever/Butch & Bonnie Barnett

JUNE NURSERY SCHEDULE

	<u>Nursery (Bible Study)</u>	--	<u>Nursery (Church Service)</u>
June 7 - Andrea Smith	Everett Peters		
June 14 - Andrea Smith	Everett Peters		
June 21 - Aimee Barnett	Everett Peters		
May 28 - Regina Hahn	Everett Peters		

JUNE MOWING LIST

June 6 - Scott Peters & Sons
June 13 - Jack Post/Andy Quam
June 20 - Robert Barnett/Butch Barnett
June 27 - Dean Thomas/Troy Thomas