

## PASTOR'S PENNINGS

How can I be happy when I'm not getting my way? "Blessed are the meek." Matthew 5:5

Who wants to be considered meek? A meek tiger doesn't get ahead in the jungle and a meek person doesn't seem to get ahead in the world. To be meek is not always to insist on your rights. To be meek is to let the other guy get his way while your own needs and desires are kept under wraps. "Meek" not only sounds like "weak," but to most people to be meek is to be weak. And to be that way never gets you ahead in school, in business, in relationships, right?

Not so with followers of Jesus. He once equated happiness with being meek and, what's more, He said that Christians actually will get ahead by putting others first. This is how He said it: "Blessed (happy) are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

You see, Jesus was talking to some very secure people when He said that. He was talking to those who had put their trust in Him. They weren't secure because they had great careers or lots of money. They were secure because they knew they had the most valuable thing anyone can ever have: a place in heaven. They trusted that Jesus would take them to heaven when they died and that made all the difference in the way they lived. Secure in God's greatest treasure, they didn't have to live the rat race of trying to secure their financial fortune by running over somebody else's rights.

Jesus' followers know this life is not all there is. Jesus' followers know they can be meek -- they don't have to get their way all the time because Jesus has set them up for an eternity of happiness.

Guess what happens when you live this way? People notice. People respect you for the way you live. People honor you as someone who puts the needs of others before your own. In that way you "get ahead" without even trying. You "inherit the earth" even if your meek lifestyle doesn't translate into big bucks.

Jesus blesses us when we walk His way in this world. Being meek isn't being weak. It's being strong. Strong in your trust in the Lord Jesus. Strong in your hope of heaven. Strong in your belief that your loving God will take care of you in this life and the next. Strong enough not to always insist on your way. Be meek. Be happy.

## PRAYER LIST

The Psalmist in Psalm 105:1 asks us to "Thank the LORD and call out His name."

\*\* On March 20th we prayed for Carolyn May's family who attended the funeral of her mother in Chicago. We thank and praise God that her mom died in the Christian faith, trusting in Jesus.

\*\* On April 3rd we prayed as a congregation thanking God for giving Mike and Kris Winkel 25 years of marriage together. God has been good to them.

\*\* Earlier this month we bombarded the throne of God with a lot of prayers for Doris Hahn who suffered two major heart attacks, and also for Charlie Quam who was hospitalized for pneumonia. Both people have made remarkable recoveries and have been sent home. Let us thank God for the gift of life and health.

\*\* Please remember to pray for the Norman mission we are supporting; for Tom Strackbein, who will be graduating from the seminary on May 20th; and for the members who were released from membership - Beth Lindquist and Robert Chapa were released for loss of contact. We are sorry to see them go. Pray that God will keep them in the faith so that we will see them again someday in glory.

## **EVANGELISM**

One of our strongest mission fields is not necessarily overseas. It's in our own back yards. It's even right in our living rooms. All of us know of someone who is a friend or family member who doesn't go to church as much as they could and should. Sometimes it's easy to share our Christian faith with people we know. There is a bond of trust established. Those people close to us know that we won't lead them the wrong way. They trust us. But, sometimes, it's harder to share our faith with those we're close to. Listen in to the following conversation. There is a Christian married couple Harry and Wilma. Then there is their unchurched brother Bob.

Unchurched Bob: Thanks for inviting me over to the barbecue Wilma. We should get together more often. It always seems like there is so much to do and so little time to do it.

Husband Harry: I have to agree with you Bob. Time is sure a precious commodity. Say Wilma, let's see the newspaper. I want to see the O.U. scores again.

Wife Wilma: Here it is Harry. You know, I was looking at it today and saw something that surprised me. The paper said that Eric Young died a few days ago. Bob, didn't you go to school with an Eric Young?

Unchurched Bob: Sure did. Actually Eric was a few years behind me. We played on the football team together. In fact, about two years ago, he bought a house right down the street from mine.

Wife Wilma: The paper said that Eric was only 38 years old. Says that he died of a sudden heart attack and left behind a wife and four small kids.

Husband Harry: Boy, that's hard. It doesn't seem fair, does it? Does the paper say what church he went to?

Wife Wilma: The paper doesn't say if Eric went to church. I hope he was a Christian.

Unchurched Bob: You're right, Bob, it's not fair. That's why I don't go to church. I don't want to listen to a God who always allows bad things to happen to good people. God's just not being fair.

How would you answer Bob? Here are some possible evangelism conversation starters:

--Well Bob, you may not want to listen to God now, but when He comes again you will have to, but then it will be too late.

--Life isn't always fair. Was it fair that Jesus being completely sinless and innocent was slaughtered and suffered the pain of hell for you?

--That shows a lot of ingratitude Bob considering that Jesus loved you enough to give His life for you and all people.

--Is it really unfair Bob? After all God did give him 38 years to repent and believe the Gospel. If he died trusting in Christ he is in heaven now. Why would that be a bad thing? If Eric is in hell because he didn't believe in Christ, isn't that fair considering that he wanted nothing to do with God's plan of salvation.

--What do you mean God always allows bad things to happen to good people? God works everything for good to those who love Him. (Romans 8)

--Define the word, "Good." Do you think God thought Eric was "Good?" How does God define, "Good?"

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

God has blessed our congregation with three new members. Glen and Donna Albertson joined by profession of faith at the last Voters' meeting, and Bernie Nelson joined by means of adult confirmation.

Glen Albertson was born in Lawton, OK, and went to Central High on 9th and Robinson in OKC. After high school, he joined the military. He was married to his wife, Donna, in Renton, WA and was baptized at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Renton at the age of 28 in 1972. After

the military he worked at Boeing in 1965 and then as a front-end mechanic for Firestone in OKC. After that he became self-employed putting up wallpaper for new home construction. Before retirement in 2006, he worked for General Lighting and Sign service as an electrician. Glen likes golf and used to fish a lot for bass and crappie.

Donna Albertson was born in Spokane, WA, and was raised on a farm. She was baptized at Emmanuel Lutheran in Cheney, WA, in 1945. She married her husband, Glen, in 1964. Apart from helping to raise their two boys and one girl, she spent 11 years working for The Oklahoman. Today they have 10 grandchildren and 1 great grandson. Hobbies are sewing and flower gardening. Family reunions are very special for both Glen and Donna.

Bernie Nelson was born in Saint James, MN, and was baptized at First Lutheran in the same town. He was a farmer's son, graduated from Central High in Alexandria, MN, and obtained an Associate Degree in General Studies at the U. of Maryland. He served 21 years in the Air Force and ended as an E-7 Master Sergeant. He spent time in England, Japan, Korea and Libya. After his military service, he worked 17-1/2 years for the State of Oklahoma inspecting meat plants for the Agriculture Department. Following that, he spent 10 years working part time with Enterprise Rent-A-Car. He was also a volunteer at the Oklahoma Food Bank. Bernie was married in 1968 and divorced in 2000. He has 1 child and 1 grandson. Bernie likes gardening, woodwork and flower growing but his main hobby is square dancing. He took his first lesson at 18 and today is involved with three local groups, the Spirit of 76, Metro Singles, and Single Squares.

What a joy it is for our new members to be a part of our spiritual family. It is our prayer that you all will be richly blessed while you are with us through the Word and Sacrament. We know you will be a blessing to us also.

## **MARY-MARTHA GUILD**

During the month of May the ladies of the Mary-Martha Guild will be focusing their concern for "New Beginnings-A Home For Mothers," which is a separate legal entity affiliated with Christian Life Resources. They support single mothers, in a residential setting, who have decided to carry their babies to term while teaching them how to include Jesus in their lives. The Mary-Martha ladies will set up a display from New Beginnings in the church narthex with more information. Anyone who would like to contribute to this cause can use the small boxes that will be placed in everyone's mail box in the entryway. All offerings will be greatly appreciated.

The 48th Annual LWMS Convention will be June 23-26 at the Frontier Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. All information on cost, hotels, etc. is posted on our bulletin board in the kitchen or you may contact Joy Hahn.

The next Mary-Martha Guild meeting will be Saturday, May 14th at 9:30AM. All ladies of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend.

### **MONDAY/THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY**

Mr. Christian Eisenbeis has finished his study of the Augsburg Confession. Thank you Christian! Many members were richly blessed with your teaching. Al Cardwell will take over Christian's night and continue his overview of Genesis on every Thursday night until the end of May. That class will then take a break for the summer. In the fall, it is our plan to do an introduction to the Old Testament books of the Bible taking one book every week. The Monday night Bible study, led by Pastor Strackbein, will begin again on Monday after Easter with various topical Bible studies and will continue throughout the summer with the exception of vacations, VBS and conferences. It begins at 6:30PM, takes 15 minutes for fellowship at 7:30, and concludes at 8:30PM. It is a good way to enjoy Christian fellowship. Make plans to attend. Each week's theme will be in Sunday's bulletin.

### **ESTABLISHING A CONTEXT FOR FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP**

Communicate the Ministry not the Budget.

Understand the importance of the way you convey the "budget" - 2 Corinthians 9:12-15: "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God...In their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

1) Realize the impact of terminology--

express more than just the "nuts & bolts" of the budget but also the ministry focus of the congregation.

2) Picture the people you hope to touch with your ministries --

endeavor to reach out to people in all walks of life, age and nationalities.

3) Use storytelling to convey the ministry plan --

this can be stories from your own personal experience or from others and from appropriate Bible stories.

4) Make wide use of reporting --

this should involve: quarterly statements; bulletins and newsletters; and meetings.

5) Continue to say thanks to God and praise His grace to us.

What is missing in identifying, planning, communicating, or ownership of the vision of your congregation? List the priorities you need to work on.

>> The “people element” -- all the people in the congregation have an ownership in the vision. Need to give more encouragement for participation, based on the Gospel message.

>> Too much attention to financial problems-deficits, etc. Play down “need/response” giving, but rather ask -- What has Christ done for us?

>> Interest lacking in young adults -- prevalent thought is that the “core” group of the congregation runs things -- need to encourage them for more involvement in their role in the vision for the church.

CW #566 v. 1-2: “We all are one in mission; We all are one in call, Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all. A single great commission compels us from above, To plan and work together, That all may know Christ's love. We all are called to service, To witness in God's name. Our ministries are different; Our purpose is the same: To touch the lives of others With God's surprising grace, So every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.”

## **VBS**

The Board of Education has picked July 11-15, from 6:00-8:00PM, for this year's Vacation Bible School. This year's theme focuses on a State of Grace: Symbols of Our State, Symbols of God's Grace. The official state symbols of Oklahoma can serve as reminder of God's grace as shown in the Bible and in our own lives. Mr. Christian Eisenbeis has volunteered to write the programs and lessons. Mr. Eisenbeis is theologically trained with the ELS Seminary in Mankato, MN. Mr. Eisenbeis will be giving all of his work to Pastor Strackbein for review. The program promises to be exciting. Stay tuned for more details in the next newsletter. In the meantime set aside the dates on your calendar. There will be classes for all ages from 4-18.

Funds will be available again from Thrivent Lutheran Insurance Company to help with the VBS expenses. Calls for teachers are in the process of being made. It is not too early to mark your summer calendar for July 11th to July 15th for Vacation Bible School. Make plans now to attend. This year's Sunday School offerings are going to the Synod Mission program called Partners In Apache Learning (PAL). The program supports Apache Indian children and their families on the Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona that have legitimate difficulties in meeting tuition expenses at one of the schools on the reservation. PAL provides the needed funding so these families can have their children grow in the blessings of a Christ-centered classroom.

## **GRACE NEWS**

Grace is gearing up for Easter. Over 10,000 cards have been mailed out. Work is going on to visit the prospects we have come in contact with. Several are very interested and have attended our worship services. We have not heard yet whether Grace will be assigned a mission vicar this year. Grace decided to ask Christian Eisenbeis to preach for them on the Sunday of the Voters' meeting so that Pastor Strackbein could attend the Voters' meeting and Grace wouldn't have to change their worship time.

## **ASCENSION DAY SERVICE**

Will be on Thursday, June 2nd at Gethsemane this year. Pastor Born will be the preacher and worship leader. It is one of the main church festivals of the year.

## **YOUTH CONFIRMATION 2011**

This year, due to no one in this age group, Holy Cross will not confirm any youth. Tom Shoenborn, Allison Evans and Stefan Paxton will conclude their second year of classes on May 15th and will start up again in the fall for their last year to be confirmed in 2012. They have done very well, having memorized the Ten Commandments, the Articles and books of the Bible. Keep them in your prayers.

## **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

The men of Holy Cross met for breakfast at Denny's restaurant, followed by Bible study at Holy Cross church on Saturday, April 23rd. The date, time, and location had not been decided for the next men's breakfast in time for this issue of the newsletter. So please check the Sunday worship bulletin.

## **SPECIAL OFFERINGS**

The following is a review of some of the funds that have been established by Holy Cross congregation to which offerings may be given:

### **Designated Offerings**

Contained with the offering envelopes each family or individual received at the beginning of the year is a special offering envelope titled "Designated Offering." Any offering placed in this envelope will go into the "Gethsemane School Fund." The offerings in this fund are sent to our sister congregation, Gethsemane Lutheran in OKC, to support their Christian Day School. Gethsemane Christian Day School provides a Christian based education for all children in the area. Presently Holy Cross does not have any children attending Gethsemane Christian Day

School. In the past many of the Holy Cross children have attended. If you would like information about sending your children to Gethsemane Christian Day School, please contact a member of the Holy Cross Board of Education.

#### Oklahoma Charities

An Oklahoma Charities Fund has been established by Holy Cross congregation to help those in and outside of Holy Cross congregation who are in need of financial help. This financial help consists of paying the bill for a month's rent, an electric bill, a heating bill, gasoline for their auto, a meal, groceries, or other items of this nature. Cash is not disbursed from the fund to any individual, only funds in the form of a check is dispersed to the author of the bill. This fund is administered by the Board of Elders along with Pastor Strackbein. There are no special offering envelopes for contributing to this fund. To contribute to this fund, place your offering in a regular offering envelope and write on the outside of the envelope "Oklahoma Charities Fund" and the amount of the offering.

#### Strackbein Medical Fund

Holy Cross congregation has established a fund to help pay for a portion of the medical expenses for Barbara Strackbein. The treatment she is receiving is not covered by health insurance. There are no special offering envelopes for contributing to this fund. To contribute to this fund, place your offering in a regular offering envelope and write on the outside of the envelope "Strackbein Medical Fund" and the amount of the offering. The following is an update on Barbara's medical progress.

Barbara was told five years ago at MD Anderson Medical Center that the average life expectancy for someone with Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia was about five years. The other bit of information that helped her decide on what kind of treatment to take was that she would probably NOT die from the cancer itself, but rather from a weakened immune system--like catching the flu or pneumonia.

This is the reason she decided to take Vitamin C intravenously, once a week,--to strengthen the immune system since there is no cure for this cancer. An indication of how much the cancer is advancing is determined by monitoring three numbers in the blood: 1) The white blood count (to see if she can fight off infection): Normal is between 4-10 - hers is between 1.7-2.9; 2) IgM proteins in the blood (this is a by-product of the involvement of the cancer in the bone marrow): Normal is 230 - hers started at 2300 five years ago and is now around 5800; and 3) Viscosity (the thickness of the blood): Normal is 1.7 - hers fluctuates between 2.2 and 3.7. Five years ago it was over 4, and this put her in danger of having a stroke, so she had two plasma exchanges to thin out the blood. June 2nd will complete five years from being diagnosed. She is extremely thankful to the Lord for feeling pain and symptom free up until this

time. She thanks the Lord each day that the members of Holy Cross have enabled her to take these Vitamin C treatments. Thank you all very much!!!

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL IS FOR ALL AGES!**

There is something for everyone. Many times people tend to think Sunday School is just for children. This is partly true. We offer classes for children of all ages. We start with Toddler Church for ages 1-3. We even have teen classes for ages 13-18. The teen class will be starting a series of 14 classes on basic Christian doctrine. Classes are set up to teach God's Word - simply and clearly. The applications are timely and developed to be a blessing and encouragement for daily living.

But Sunday School isn't just for children. It is also meant for adults. Starting the first Sunday after Easter (today), the Adult class will begin a Bible study on the Book of Revelation. We will use our Bibles and take it verse by verse. What are some of the things you will find out? 1) Revelation is not as complicated as it seems. 2) Who or what is the anti Christ? Is there more than one? Are they here now? Will the end of the world come shortly after a major battle in the Middle East? Will Christ come back and rule in Jerusalem for a thousand years? What do the strange beasts and critters symbolize? What does the future hold for us as believers in Christ? How can we prepare for the events that are prophesied? Revelation is a book of sharp warning for the unbeliever and awesome comfort for the believer in Christ. Come and participate Sunday mornings at 9:15AM. The course will probably last most of the summer.

### **VOTERS' BODY MEETING**

The Quarterly Voters' Body Meeting was held April 17th. Financial statements for the first quarter of 2011 were given by the Fiscal Secretary and the Treasurer. The Endowment Committee presented a draft copy of an amendment to the Holy Cross church By-laws to establish endowment funds and trust funds to which members can contribute. Action on establishing the By-laws was tabled to await response from the District Constitution Committee and to allow Holy Cross members additional time to review the proposed By-laws. Approval was granted to tile the floors and four foot of the walls in the ladies and mens restrooms. In addition the congregation Chairman will investigate the feasibility of enlarging the restrooms. All Boards reported on their activities during the quarter. The next Voters' meeting will be held July 17th.

### **TAKE ME OUT TO THE OLE BALL GAME**

That's what the Board of Stewardship would like to do. The young and old, and anyone in between, is invited. Plans are being made for attending a OKC Redhawks game on Sunday, June 5th. Plans are to meet at church at 2:45PM and then off to the ball game which starts at

4:05PM. A sign-up sheet has been provided on the church bulletin board for those who would like to attend. Group tickets for the game will be purchased. For more information see Tony Taylor or Cliff Gallarneau.

### **HEY AMIGOS!!!**

We have done the chili cook-off, and the BBQ cook-off, and now we are ready for a Mexican cook-off. The date is Saturday, May 7th, the time is 6:00PM. So, get your favorite recipe for a Mexican dish, cook it, and bring it. If you are not a cook, then you qualify as a judge. The judges get to taste all of the Mexican dishes and then vote for the one they think is the best. Everyone come by--be a cook, or a judge, or both. It will be a lot of fun to eat and judge. For more information contact any member of the Board of Stewardship.

### **SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS**

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

### **HC - MAY GREETERS**

May 1 - Tom & Janet Finney

May 8 - Marlon & Karen Henry

May 15 - Gene & Ada Hill

May 22 - Mike & Latischa Huller

May 29 - George & Nancy McKinnis

### **HC - MAY CLEANING LIST**

May 7 - Trevor Oestreich/Laura Lunsford

May 14 - Mary-Martha Guild

May 21 - Buddy & Ryan Neese/George & Nancy McKinnis

May 28 - Kahle & Sabrina Mayfield/Fred & Shelly Jenkins

### **HC - MOWING LIST**

May 7 - Dean & Troy Thomas

May 14 - Tom Finney/Cliff Gallarneau

May 21 - Rick Poulin/Paul Barnett

May 28 - Butch & Robert Barnett

### **ODE TO THE ROBIN**

By Delores Staats

Now, robins are very fine creatures;  
So proper and trim their attire.  
With red vest, a brown suit and coattails;  
Such neatness I really admire!  
They're up bright and early each morning  
So cheery their wakening song!  
They trust in the Lord for their bounty  
Each day finding food for their young.  
Their energy level astounds me!  
They put me to shame, sad to say;  
For while I'm still snoozing at seven  
They've already put in half a day!  
If I should compare them to people  
They remind me of good German folk  
Who farm with a diligent fervor  
And never are lazy or broke.  
Their hearing and eyesight amaze me  
As they listen with head toward the ground

They can spy a small insect that's feeding  
Or hear a worm crawling around!  
I remember one pair at our lake home;  
They nested on top of a post!  
With no cover to shield them from weather  
It seemed they were dumber than most.  
But was I surprised in a down pour  
When she cuddled down in the nest  
And he spread his wing, to protect her;  
Took the brunt of the storm for the rest!  
What tender parental devotion  
Displayed for my wondering eyes!  
Such wisdom shown by their Creator  
Should never have been a surprise!

#### "The Light Turned Yellow"

The light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects. He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the

'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, so naturally . . . I assumed you had stolen the car."