

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

Real Wealth

Jesus told this parable, "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop . . . he said, ' . . . I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, ' You fool_ This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

"I need money_"

"How much money do you need?"

"Lots_ Start with *one* and keep adding zeros until I say, 'Stop.'"

Did you ever have a conversation like this? At times we dream about being very wealthy. What would we do? Quit our jobs? Buy a new car? Travel?

While it is fun to dream, the reality is that we are richer than most people in this world. Yet we may not feel rich, even though we have almost everything for maintaining a fairly comfortable lifestyle. So why don't we feel rich?

The main reason is because there's something wrong with all of us. We have a sinful nature. It likes to twist things around in our minds so we constantly want more. And when we get more, our sinful nature still isn't satisfied.

Jesus illustrates this in a story about a farmer who had a bumper crop one year. Instead of giving away the surplus to feed the hungry or to proclaim how generous God had been with him, he thought only of himself. He planned to build bigger barns and take life easy. But soon he died. All his accumulated wealth went to some-one else, and he had to face God.

Acquiring a lot of wealth in this world is finally worth-less without Jesus. He is our real wealth. The Bible says, "*Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich*" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus, the eternal Son of God, left heaven and humbled Himself to become a man. He bore the punishment of our sin, including the greed that lurks within our sinful nature. The result of His poverty is that we are freely given the riches of forgiveness and life with God.

When we think about our lives, we have so much for which to thank God. Though we may not have all the worldly riches of our dreams, we have real wealth in Jesus_

GIVE THANKS FOR . . .

→ Food and drink, Family and friends, Health and prosperity, Nation and freedom,

BUT ESPECIALLY FOR . . .

→ God's Son, our Savior Jesus, Jesus' life as our righteous Substitute, Christ's death for us on the cross, His glorious resurrection from the dead, Grace and forgiveness in His name, Peace with God.

PRAYER LIST

Psalm 102:2 - "*Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.*"

Since the last newsletter we have prayed in church for:

* Bonita Barnett who was hospitalized at Griffon in Norman;

* Doug Dinse who had a hip procedure done;

* Dan Peek, 2nd cousin of Sunny Stuever, who had surgery for a brain tumor;

* Kerry Zimdars, mother of Jeremy Zimdars, who was diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer and liver cancer; and

* Barbara Strackbein who had a complete hip replacement done.

All of the above are still at various stages of recovery. Please continue to pray that God will bless and keep them in His love and use these afflictions to see ever more clearly the grace of our Lord Jesus.

* We also thank the Lord for blessing Jean and Russell Luebking with a 66th anniversary of their marriage.

* Please also thank the Lord again in my behalf for granting me 30 years of grace in the public ministry. God is very gracious_

STEWARDSHIP

In the Quarterly Voters' Meeting Sunday afternoon, October 18, 2009, the proposed budget for the coming year was reviewed and altered somewhat before finally being approved. The budget was a joint effort of all the Boards and required dedicated time on the part of all to arrive at realistic, meaningful financial goals. Thank you Board Chairmen, Board members and all who helped to bring about a successful outcome.

There was healthy discussion about mission goals and the exact focus of our 2010 mission effort. A Church Mission Offering (CMO) goal of \$25,000.00 was set. This is \$2,083.00 per month. The \$145,587.00 total budget includes the mission commitment. That is a financial commitment of \$12,132.00 per month. The Voters feel this is a very realistic goal and with our Lord's help we can meet and then exceed it. The Voters also approved \$4,000.00 for improving the kitchen, restroom and fellowship areas.

The above commitments will require the dedication of all members in our "team effort" to be successful in our mission as servants in the Lord's work. When we miss church or fail to contribute to the Lord's work, we cast a vote to close down the operation. More people are needed to help with the many chores around our facility. These are areas of service to the Lord. Your church Officers and Boards need the full cooperation of every member to make sure the mission of spreading the Gospel by Holy Cross can successfully move forward.

From the Finance Committee

EVANGELISM

Our Outreach Board has been doing some canvassing. Last month we hit the jackpot. We went to a huge apartment complex behind Homeland Supermarket on Pennsylvania Ave. and found almost 40% of those who came to the door had just recently moved in. Most were unchurched. Some were looking for churches. Almost all were friendly and many were willing to chat. One man said he was one of only a few Christians that went to his Unitarian Church and that sometimes it was hard to defend his Christian faith. We pulled out a Holy Cross business card (which all of you should have copies of to share with people you meet), and pointed to the back which says, "Come and see_" It then gives a WELS web site www.WhatAboutJesus.com. We told him to look it up and he would find tons of information that would help him share the truth about Jesus. Of course, we also pointed out our own web site on the front side and shared with him the basics of our faith. If you want to have some exciting times sharing your faith, or if you want to learn how to share your faith, come to a board meeting and go out with us. On November 22nd at 4:00PM we will canvass some more of that apartment complex.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE/DINNER

Thanksgiving is coming up. There will be a special worship service November 26th at 10:00AM. Last year about 30 members gathered to have their Thanksgiving meal at church after the service. It was a beautiful experience. The Kingsgate community was invited along with people who recently moved into the area. No visitors came. This year, the Outreach Board is planning on inviting Hispanics for our church service and meal through several newspapers and community sources.

Because Holy Cross has a sizeable amount of members belonging to Thrivent Insurance for Lutherans, Thrivent has offered up to \$1,600 towards this meal. All food and other expenses (with receipts), time spent cooking, setting up, or doing anything towards this project will be counted towards that \$1,600. An advance of \$800 has already been given. A sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board if you plan to come, or if you want to bring some food. (Again, if you do, keep those receipts.) A deadline for signing up will be established (see bulletin board).

Although it has not been decided yet while I am writing this, it is very possible that the Outreach Board together with the congregational Thrivent Coordinators, (Doug Hahn, Pastor, and Latischa Huller), will decide to have the whole project catered. Please feel free to bring family members, friends and neighbors. They will be fed well both spiritually and physically. If there are a lot of leftovers, we will probably have a meal for the congregation on the next Sunday. It would be great if we could fill up the fellowship hall.

NURSERY HELPERS

The Board of Education is still looking for volunteers to sit in the nursery during Bible study and during church services. You can choose to do just the Bible studies, just the church service, or both. You can choose to do just one Sunday a month or more if you like. We are currently looking for people to cover the month of November. If you can assist the congregation by covering one of these areas, you can e-mail Craig Ballinger (whoknows2004@cox.net), or sign up on the sheet on the board in the fellowship hall. Thank you.

ANNIVERSARY THANK YOU

From the bottom of our hearts, Barbara and I would like to thank all of you for the worship service you planned where we together could praise our God for His grace in bringing the Gospel to hundreds of people. We were not the focus of this celebration. God was. All of us are His servants. Barbara and I could not have done any Kingdom work if God had not moved you, His people, to support us with your prayers, cooperation and offerings. That applies to all thirty years of my public ministry. When I was in Kansas, the two congregations I served were home missions of WELS supported by your Church Mission Offerings (CMO). When I served in the Caribbean, it was also the grace of God moving you to make the work possible with your mission offerings. Here at Holy Cross, you make the same thing possible with your offerings going to the general fund. Barb and I have had many wonderful opportunities to share the Gospel. For that we thank God, but we also thank God for using you folks. What is humbling is to see you do it with such love and willingness. In addition to the worship service, thank you for the pot luck, the gifts of stoles for my robe, the picture albums, the gift of money, and the kind words. Most of all, thank you for your love. The feeling is mutual for all of you.

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

The Mary-Martha Guild met on Saturday, October 3rd. Pastor showed a film from his trip to Israel for the Bible study. It highlighted what is believed to be Caiaphas' home and pit below. The pit is believed to have held Jesus until all 70 elders could come together to judge Him.

Information was presented on the 2010 annual LWML convention to be held at the Millennium hotel in St. Louis, MO. A request will be made for Holy Cross congregation in 2010 to budget \$1,000 for helping the ladies from Holy Cross defray hotel expenses. Information on a ladies retreat to be held at Camp Shiloh, TX in March will be given at a later date.

Plans were made for having dinners before the Advent services on the three Wednesday in December. The ladies of Holy Cross will be preparing the meals. If anyone would like to volunteer to help with the dinners, please contact Joy Hahn.

The next meeting will be November 14th at 9:30AM.

NORMAN MISSION NEWS

The Outreach Board sat in a Norman meeting. Tentative plans have been made to start in January.

Not much has been set in stone, but for now we hope to have youth catechism classes on Saturday from 4:00-6:00PM. Pastor would spend another day during the week tending to the new Norman Mission concerns, as well as visiting Norman members not joining the mission effort. The people who plan to be a part of this endeavor have committed about \$18,000. Holy Cross will support the mission with her prayers, and through monthly special envelopes the Elders will put in every member's mail box. Holy Cross will not support the Norman Mission with regular General Fund or Church Mission Offering money. Large grants from wealthy WELS member foundations have been applied for, as well as from the Synod. If received, they would go for a good rental facility that can be used 7 days per week, huge amounts of advertising, and if possible, man power. Although the grants would be a blessing, the mission is not dependent on them. A rental site will be looked for after we find out whether any foundations will award grant money. The same thing applies to the final budget that will be submitted to Holy Cross Voters in January. We won't know what that budget will be until we know if any foundations will give the effort some money. The reason the Norman budget has to pass by the Holy Cross Voters is because all Norman members will continue to be Holy Cross members until a constitution is formed and accepted by the South Central District of WELS. In fact, 1/3 of Holy Cross' Board members will be people from the Norman Mission.

One thing everyone should realize about the Norman Mission is that none of the participants asked to have a Norman mission started. All of them have said they would serve at Holy Cross or in Norman

depending on which of the three mission based projects the congregation studied for over a year, (Mother's Day Out/preschool, expansion/renovation of the entryway or the Norman mission). In fact, most of the people now in the Norman project were strongly working on the committee for a Mother's Day Out outreach program for Holy Cross. That, not a Norman mission was their #1 goal. So, the purpose for considering Norman as a mission site is NOT to save Norman people driving time to church. It is because: 1) Southern Moore and Northern Norman are the fastest growing towns in Oklahoma; 2) WELS cannot financially open new missions any more. The only current way to bring the Gospel to more people in the states is for congregations like ours to spin off new churches and mentor them; 3) Over 50% of the population of Norman is unchurched; 4) Of the three outreach choices, the Norman Mission won the overwhelming majority at the July Voters' Meeting; and 5) Reaching these unchurched people can more easily be done with a new group in Norman rather than trying to get the Norman unchurched into Holy Cross.

For over a year and a half committees have been reporting, explaining, and writing articles. God led the congregation to choose the Norman Mission Committee's recommendations as the principle focus of our local mission outreach. As your Pastor, I would like to encourage everyone to rally around the cause. World Missions is a noble cause but so is local mission work. What an opportunity for brothers in the faith to join hands around a common cause, all to the glory of God.

ADVENT SERVICES

Once again the Elders have scheduled three Wednesday Advent services at 7:00PM. They will begin on December 2nd. Make plans to attend. Watch for the service themes in the next newsletter.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHTS

As most of you know, Pastor went to Israel using salary money set aside for pastoral education. The trip was with about 12 pastors and two pastors' wives. Pastor would like to share with you some of the unique perspectives he received having seen the places Jesus did many of His miracles. Devotions were held several times a day using texts that corresponded to the places we were visiting. Slides and some video clips, along with commentary, will be shown on Friday, November 6th at 7:00PM. Come and have a good time. Pastor will be showing some of the devotion clips when appropriate at Mary-Martha, and during other Bible studies throughout the coming year.

On Friday the 13th we have another movie night with ice cream and drinks. We will start the ice cream at 6:30PM and the movie (the third in the Janet Oaks series) at 7:00PM.

RENOVATION UPDATE

The Renovation Committee was asked by the Holy Cross Voters' Body to provide basic plans and costs for enlarging the church entryway and restrooms. A local contractor was contacted who provided the requested information. This information was reviewed by the committee and forwarded to the Board of Property Management for their recommendation to the Voters' Body. For unknown reasons this information was not provided to the Voters' Body for consideration. In place of this, a recommendation was made and approved by the Voters' Body to paint the fellowship area and rest-rooms, install floor tile in the restrooms and fellowship area, replace the facades over the entryways, and replace the entry doors into the Sunday school area. This completes the duties assigned to the Renovation Committee which will be dissolved.

THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS

In past years members of Holy Cross congregation have been bringing non-perishable food items to the church to be given in food baskets to needy families in the congregation and community. Holy Cross is presently having a Thanksgiving dinner and inviting members of the community and congregation to this dinner. Therefore, Holy Cross members will no longer be asked to bring non-perishable food items to church. If you know of a family, please invite them to the Thanksgiving dinner rather than bring food items. Our thanks go to all those who have donated food items in the past.

PIONEERS/YOUTH GROUP

The Pioneers and Youth groups are planning another outing on November 14th, leaving at 11:00AM and returning at 6:30PM. The plan is to go to Fort Sill at Lawton, OK. There a tour will be made of old Fort Sill, the old Fort Sill Museum, artillery equipment displays (outside), air defense missiles (also outside, which are currently being shipped to Fort Sill from FT Bliss and being erected), and the Artillery Museum. Also, if time permits, a visit will be made to Geronimo's grave, and a drive-by of a few motor pools to see equipment that is currently being used by the military. For more information watch the Sunday worship bulletins, the youth bulletin board, or contact Byron and Dina Shoumaker.

NOVEMBER 28TH - MARK THE DATE

If you have children ages 4 through confirmation age, then please plan on being at church on Saturday mornings, starting on November 28th, to practice for the Children's Christmas Eve service. Please note that ages 4-6 will only need to be at church for 30 minutes -- from 9:30-10:00AM each Saturday morning. All other ages will practice from 9:30-11:30AM each Saturday morning.

What a wonderful opportunity for our children to share the story of the love of God through His Son Jesus. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

NEWS FROM THE ELDERS

The budget is set for 2010, the Norman mission is well on its way, and we are now entering the last quarter of the church year, which is listed below. But, before we get into the last quarter of the church year, I want to cover a few things in which I have not been able to cover in previous newsletters.

First off, I want to talk to you about our CMO offerings. Up until just about 4 months ago I didn't know what that stood for 100%, but I had an idea because it is always being talked about. It got me to thinking which led me into doing some research, which led me into asking some questions. To find out what I thought was the definition of CMO, was not the definition at all. So let's try to clear it up. The definition of CMO is, "Congregation Mission Offerings." Where do we find this? It is the red lettering found on your weekly offering envelope, just on the right side, and it says, "The Lords Work in Wisconsin Synod Missions." So what does this mean? Every year when Holy Cross sets up its yearly budget we also set a number for our CMO giving, which in the past years has always been exceeded by year's end. For example, our CMO offering for 2009 was set at \$29,000 and it looks like before the end of the year we will exceed that amount. Using monthly projections to predict the year-end offering, it comes to a figure of about \$32,000. In 2008 the CMO was set at \$25,000, and we exceeded that number by the year's end to \$29,000. So what does this tell us? It tells us that the members at Holy Cross have a loving heart for missions and like supporting our Synod in their mission to extend the Lord's work in the mission fields across the Synod. When you check that block on the right side of your weekly offering envelope, it means that offering is going to the Synod to support our Synod CMO goal. The black lettering on your weekly envelope, which is found on the left side of your envelope is for the Holy Cross general fund. What this means is when you check that block, the monies go to support our Holy Cross budget items, such as Pastor's salary, office supplies, Sunday school supplies, keeping the lights, etc.

Why is all of this so important? Because in the past I think there has been some confusion in what all of this meant. We on the Board of Elders finally came to realize this is an important topic area that needed to be cleared up. It is going to be more important now than ever, because if you want to support our Synod or you would like to specify one general area, you must manually write that on your envelope. Write on the envelope what you want that contribution to go to, such as China Partners, Norman Mission, and so on. This enables the Financial Secretary to get that contribution put in the right place.

To recap, if you check the left side of your offering envelope, that contribution will go to the General Fund. If you check the right side of your offering envelope, that contribution will go only to the Synod for our CMO goal. For all other offerings, you must manually write what you want that contribution to go for. I hope this clears up some confusion.

Fourth Quarter church calendar:

--Nov. 1st - Reformation service at Holy Cross- 4:00PM - offering CMO.

--Nov. 26th - Thanksgiving service - 10:00AM with a Thanksgiving dinner to follow for all members and guests from the surrounding communities - please RSVP so it will give us an idea on how much food to prepare. This is an outreach effort to get to know others in our area, and it gives our members the

chance to ask that neighbor, or friend, or work companion to join us in fellowship with others. You may live close to an elderly person, retired with no one to celebrate that day with, bring them along. Also, it will give the Norman folks the opportunity to kick off their outreach program in the Norman area.

--Dec. 2nd -Advent Service-Wed. 7:00PM- Offering COR

--Dec. 9th -Advent Service-Wed. 7:00PM - Offering CMO

--Dec. 16th -Advent Service-Wed. 7:00PM-Offering CMO

--Dec. 24th - Children's Christmas Eve service 6:00PM - Offering designation will be made by the Board of Education.

--Dec. 25th - Christmas Day service-10AM-Offering CMO

--Dec. 31st - New Year's Eve service at 7:00PM - Offering, Holy Cross General Fund.

That's all we have for you right now. Hope all of our information will be helpful. Thanks from the Board of Elders.

VOTERS' MEETING

The Quarterly Voters' Body Meeting was held Sunday, October 18th. A budget totaling \$141,587.00, which includes contributions to the Norman Mission and to the Synod Church Mission Offering (CMO), was presented. After reviewing all items, a total budget of \$145,587.00 was adopted, which includes a CMO goal of \$25,000.00.

The Board of Property Management presented a proposal to do basic repair work on the restrooms, north entry door, fellowship area, and kitchen with the cost not to exceed \$4,000.00. This proposal was approved. Also approved was expenditures for the installation of speakers in the fellowship area, Sunday school area, and restrooms.

A slate of candidates for the various Boards and Offices was presented and accepted. The candidates were elected by unanimous vote. A list of the officers and board members will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

All Boards reported on their activities during the past quarter of 2009. The next Voters' Body meeting will be held January 17, 2010.

CHISHOLM TRAIL TRIP

Twenty-six members and friends from Holy Cross enjoyed the trip to the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan, OK, Mount Scott, and the Holy City in Lawton, OK. At the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center everyone was able to experience firsthand the hardship and conditions associated with driving a herd of cattle on the Chisholm Trail from San Antonio, TX to Abilene, KS in the 1800's. On Mount Scott, the highest mountain in the state of Oklahoma, they were able to see the surrounding country in all directions with its fall colors. The Holy City gave a glimpse of the life of Christ through the buildings and locations used in the presentation of the Easter story each year. Thanks to Sue Piña and Joy Hahn for planning this great trip.

SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS

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

NOVEMBER GREETERS

Nov. 1 - Jack & LaVon Post

Nov. 8 - Byron & Dina Shoumaker

Nov. 15 - Shawn & Charity Stuever

Nov. 22 - Craig Ballinger & Andrea Smith

Nov. 29 - Paul & Aimee Barnett

NOVEMBER CLEANING LIST

Nov. 7 - George Bradshaw/Debbie Korff

Nov. 14 - Don & Darlene Chaddock/Patti Buczynskyj

Nov. 21 - Marlon & Karen Henry/Al & Carol Cardwell

Nov. 28 - Bill & Fran Shoumaker/Cheryl Littlejohn

Nursery-Bible Study

Nov. 1 - Aimee Barnett
Nov. 8 - Darlene Chaddock
Nov. 15 - Aimee Barnett
Nov. 22 - Open
Nov. 29 - Open

NURSERY SCHEDULE

Nursery-Church Service

Carol Cardwell
Will Peters
Carol Cardwell
Everett Peters
Latischa Huller

PRAYER

By Delores Staats, Barb Strackbein's Mother

*Oh, Lord, I turn to Thee for rest
When troubles rage within my breast;
When all the world is cold and bleak
And Satan tries my soul to seek;
Then in Your precious Word I find
Direction for my troubled mind.*

*Beside my bed I kneel in prayer;
It's always good to know You're there
To ask for help and strength each day
And guidance for the narrow way.
You understand my every need;
You truly are my Friend, indeed_*

*My troubles, then, I'll not despise
For they are blessings in disguise_
For if our lives were filled with ease
Then we'd do only as we please.
By chastenings sore, tho' hard to bear
You keep us steadfastly at prayer.*

*So while I live I shall give praise
That comfort You afford my days.
You are my Peace, my Hope, my Joy;
My only help when cares annoy.
I learn once more how much You care
And how You truly answer prayer_*