

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

Facing Final Judgment

Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left" (Matthew 25:31-33).

No one likes to be called a goat. It usually means that someone has made a mistake costing his team a game, or his company lots of money. Feeling like a goat is an uncomfortable situation.

Yet that's exactly where many people will find themselves on the last day -- among the goats. This is what Jesus taught in a short story that speaks volumes for our lives. He described what will take place in the final judgment at the end of the world.

What is the meaning of Jesus' story? Let us start with the goats. What are they like? If you have ever seen one in a zoo or had one as a pet, you know that they are cute, have little horns and are often stubborn and arrogant. They enjoy being alone, and seem to think they are the boss of all that is around them.

Sheep on the other hand enjoy being together in flocks, and they listen and follow when the farmer calls them. Gathered together in the flock, sheep find safety from the dangers that threaten them. They enjoy the peace of grazing in the meadow. If a sheep happens to wander from the flock, the farmer might go after it.

Jesus uses the distinction of sheep and goats as a picture of those who will join Him in heaven for all eternity and those who will not. The picture is stark. Goats, those who turn away from the voice of the farmer stubbornly follow their own will and desires, and whose pursuits are set on worldly things, have no part in the peace of heaven.

Sheep, those who love the peace and safety the shepherd provides, will enjoy that peace and safety forever. That's a peace and safety found not in the absence of hardships in this life. It's a peace and safety found not in the desires of wealth. It is a peace and safety that comes from the knowledge and acceptance of sins forgiven through Jesus' own blood.

Trusting our Good Shepherd, Jesus, we have no fear of facing the final judgment. We are corralled by His love and rest safely in His arms. Wonderfully, He leads us to life with God forever.

PRAYER LIST

John 14:13 - And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."

Let us thank the Lord for answering many of the prayers we gave to Him this last month.

-- By God's grace Mrs. Ruth Strackbein recovered her health and was able to leave the hospital.

-- Chase Chaddock's surgery on his tonsils went well and he has recovered nicely.

-- Preston Hilliary, who had an extreme case of pancreatitis was sent home. Although the doctors do not know what created the emergency, it is a blessing that his life was spared.

-- We praise our Lord for having blessed Charlotte Glass with a good recovery from her kidney removal and pray that she will continue to regain her strength. In the meantime, let us pray that she remains patient and full of trust in our God.

-- Once again, we thank the Lord for having granted Karen and Marlon Henry 54 years of wedded bliss. May God grant you many more according to His will.

STEWARDSHIP

God tells us through His servant Paul in II Cor. 8:7-12, **(7)** *"But just as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace if giving. **(8)** *I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. **(9)** *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. **(11)** *Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it according to your means. **(12)** *For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."*****

Vs. 7 - Why is it most appropriate to speak of the "grace of giving?" *Giving is not natural. It is a gift of God's grace. Where does all Christian giving begin? With God's giving.*

Vs. 8 - Agree or disagree? It is proper to motivate giving by providing people with an opportunity to see what others are giving. *The point of verse 8 (also verses 1-5) is to look at the attitude, the earnestness, and the zeal of the Macedonians. The emphasis is not on the amount.*

Vs. 9 - What does the message of this verse have to do with our giving? *Everything. The grace of giving begins with the grace of God in Christ. That is our motivation. That is our power.* How can people be led to look upon giving as a blessing rather than a burden? *Keep your eyes focused on God's marvelous grace; then you'll love to give.*

Vs. 11 - "Finish the work." Agree or disagree? It is proper for the church to command giving. *Disagree. But it is proper, necessary in fact, to use the law to condemn greed, materialism, etc. (See Malachi 3:6ff; James 5:1ff.)*

Vs. 12 - "The gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." What do these words say about small offerings? About large offerings? *They make it clear that the amount is not the key point.* Agree or disagree? The church should more actively pursue large gifts than small gifts. *Disagree. Both are equally important.*

EVANGELISM

Our God has called us not only to grow in the Word but to go with the Word into the world. That means outreach ministry is to be an important part of the life and budget of our congregation.

To fulfill this calling it is good to not only have out-reach strategies in place but also to have an internal preparedness. In your opinion, how prepared is Holy Cross to reach out with the Gospel to the community? If you feel there is an area that is lacking, ask yourself, "What can I do to improve what is weak." If you feel Holy Cross is doing well in an area, ask yourself, "What can I do to keep it strong and make it even stronger?"

- The members of Holy Cross own the mission of the church and desire to seek the lost.
- A growing percentage of the budget is for outreach work.
- Holy Cross generously supports the world-wide mission work of the Synod.
- Evangelism callers are recruited and trained for law/gospel visits with prospects.
- Friendship witnessing is taught and practiced regularly.
- We have "go" strategies (e.g. canvass, telephone, out-reach, newcomer outreach).
- The outreach mission of the church is regularly modeled, preached and taught by pastor and leadership.
- We have attractive and cost-effective publicity and advertising in the community.
- New members are eagerly received and assimilated into the ongoing life of the church.
- The building and grounds are well kept, strikingly attractive, neat, clean and joyful in appearance.
- There are greeters to welcome people before the service (at or outside the door) and after service.
- A warm, friendly and caring membership greets visitors first before talking to friends.
- Harmony and unity is evident in the church's life.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to several new members as well as some long-term guests.

First of all **Calle Solie** is a Freshman in college and will be attending Holy Cross while she is in school. Her home church is in Arizona. Please make her feel welcome.

Secondly, **Wade Varner** is an army Captain who has just moved to Lawton. What a blessing to serve those who are serving us. We are happy God led you to Oklahoma, and to Holy Cross.

Three WELS families have also transferred their membership to Holy Cross. **Chuck Cateora** moved to Oklahoma from Colorado and married a woman by the name of Becky. Becky is taking Bible information classes. I will give some more detailed information about them in a future newsletter. In the meantime, welcome to Holy Cross Chuck_ Becky, we will look for-ward to seeing you with Chuck and pray that you will also soon become a part of our family.

Phillip Class, what a pleasure to have you as a new member_ It is with joy that we look forward to getting to know you. May God bless your life here in Oklahoma City.

Timothy and **Robin James** have moved to Oklahoma City and have chosen to join Holy Cross. We are happy God led you to us Timothy and Robin_

It is our prayer, Timothy and Robin that you will be blessed spiritually as members of our family in Christ and that we will be blessed through you. As with the other new members, we are excited that God has led you here. It will be a joy to get to know you better.

EDUCATION

September 6th will begin a new year for Sunday School. That will be the day children who are old enough will switch to a new class. If you are not sure, ask our Sunday School Superintendent, Craig Ballinger. Since it is a new year, all the teachers will be installed during the worship service.

The Education Committee plans were tabled at the last Voters' meeting in favor of general renovation. The committee will remain operative and will make plans for post-renovation education ideas.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation classes will begin once again on September 20th. Classes will last 2-1/2 hours, from 12:15-2:45PM on communion Sundays and from 12:00- 2:30PM on non-communion Sundays. This year, a three-year confirmation program begins for the first time. First year students will have an intensive Bible History class from 9:15-10:15AM during normal Sunday School hours. Those children who know their Bible history well, and can demonstrate that to Pastor, may skip the Bible History year and join Pastor's afternoon class and upon successful completion, be confirmed in two years. All parents who want to enroll their children in Confirmation Class are asked to meet with Pastor after church on either Sunday, August 30th or Sunday, September 6th.

NORMAN MISSION REPORT

Holy Cross at its last Voters' meeting decided 15-4, to start a Norman Mission in January of 2010. It was also decided (17-4) that a Norman Mission fund be started immediately. That means anyone may write on their envelopes, "Norman Mission Fund" and it will be set aside for that purpose. For now, the Norman Mission will fall under the Holy Cross Outreach Board who will meet with the new group on September 19th, 7:00PM, at Craig Ballinger's home. They will discuss an initial budget and make plans.

The first meeting of interested Norman people was held at Pastor Johnston's house in Norman on July 11th. It was determined that the people involved were very committed to the project. A tentative plan was made to try and rent a room at a large apartment complex and target the people in the complex as their main mission focus. They also discussed ways of getting a pastor before they had enough members to afford one. One thought was to try after a couple of years to call seminary students who did not receive regular calls to come and serve in tent-making capacities. That means they would work part time at a regular job and part time at the church. As the congregation grows they would spend more and more time in the ministry.

Please pray for this mission effort. It will be exciting to collaborate with and help this project get started and through the power of God to grow.

MISSION FESTIVAL

A Mission Festival will be celebrated on September 13th. Missionary Jim Radtloff will give a mission presentation at 9:15AM on WELS work in Red China. He will have just come back from a two week teaching visit. The story of how God led WELS pastors and lay people into China is fascinating. He will be the preacher for our festival service using John 1:43-51 as his text. The theme will be "Won By Christ To Bring One To Christ." Missionary Radtloff and his wife will give a presentation on their mission work on the Island of Granada during the pot luck in the afternoon, as soon as he has finished eating. Plan to be a part of both presentations. It will be a memorable day.

LITURGY-HYMN SINGING

The Lutheran church, since the time of the Reformation, has been known as the singing church. Before the Reformation the people never sang. It was all done by the choirs of monks and priests. Luther introduced congregational hymn singing and it is something that is still considered an important part of the service.

The purpose of hymn singing is to glorify God and edify our fellow worshippers. Since Lutherans emphasize the means of grace (the Gospel in Word and Sacrament) Lutheran Hymnody almost always

concentrates on teaching Scriptural truths based on Scripture. They are not chosen just because they have a nice melody or make people feel warm and fuzzy. Their focus is on what Christ has done for us and our response of praise. The hymns that are selected by the pastor are usually related to the theme of the day. Because Christian worship is not designed to be entertaining, it is important for congregation members to concentrate on the message proclaimed in the hymns. Some hymns may be difficult to sing because they are old and were sung by other Christians hundreds of years ago. Not everyone knows all the hymn melodies. Gradually expanding the number of hymns one knows is worth the effort. Why? Because, as we sing these hymns, we are united in spirit with Christians who have come before us and whose voices we will join with in the choirs of heaven.

TRIP TO ISRAEL

Every year Holy Cross congregation sets aside \$1,200 which is deposited into CEF savings. This amount is allowed to accumulate for use by the pastor at his discretion to further his education as approved by Holy Cross. Last year Pastor Strackbein spent 15 days taking WELS seminary's summary quarter classes. This year the Elders approved his taking an eight day tour of Israel with about 15 other WELS pastors. Pastor Strackbein will leave Tuesday, September 8th and return Tuesday, September 15th.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

A Nominating Committee will be formed this month. Prayerfully consider it an opportunity to serve on a board or committee in the coming year. This becomes especially important in 2010 with the beginning of the Norman Mission. The Nominating Committee will be calling all members in September.

HOLY CROSS MEMBERS GO UNDERGROUND

Sponsored by Mary-Martha, a group of sixteen members and one visitor from Holy Cross, joined a charter bus group for a trip to Yoder, KS to a salt mine. The mine is 650 feet below the earth's surface, with a 24 hour, year-round temperature of 62 degrees. This mine is a part of a network that runs from Arkansas to New Mexico. The salt that is mined at Yoder is the type that we use in winter to melt ice and snow. The City of Chicago is their biggest customer.

One of the most interesting features of the mine is that it is used by many organizations for storage. Hollywood has Superman's cape, and Batman's uniform along with many other things in storage there. The government, as well as others, have stored paperwork and documents in the mine to preserve them. We saw a newspaper printed on the day that Abraham Lincoln was shot, that had not yellowed and was very readable. Three semi-trailers a week arrive at the mine loaded with items for storage, which are catalogued and organized by a group of employees and then placed in the storage area.

One of the highlights of the trip was a delicious noon meal served in an Amish restaurant. Each person could choose from about twenty varieties of pie for dessert.

Another church outing is planned for October 24th. This will feature a trip to Mt. Scott, a Chisholm Trail Museum, and the Holy City of the Wichita's all located near Lawton, OK. Carroll Dinse

ICE CREAM AND MOVIE

Hey, what can be better than a movie and ice cream? Mark it on your calendar right now - September 18th at 5:30PM for popcorn, drinks, snacks and ice cream. The movie titled "Love Enduring Promise" will begin at 6:30PM. This is being sponsored by the Board of Stewardship.

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

Mary-Martha will be starting up again in September. All ladies of the congregation are invited (encouraged) to attend. The meetings consist of having a Bible study, business meeting and small project. The projects this year will be writing letters to different missionaries around the world. The meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:30AM. September 12th will be the first fall meeting of 2009.

On October 24, 2009, Suzanne Piña has graciously set up another one-day adventure for the church. We will be staying in Oklahoma this time, going to the Chisholm Trail Museum in Marlow, eating lunch at Giuseppe's Italian Dining, going to the top of Mt. Scott and then to the Holy City of the Wichita's. If there is time we will also go to the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. We leave church at 8:30AM and will return around 7:30-8:00PM.

There will be lunch meat, cheese, bread and chips for those who want to eat after returning to church and before going home.

BOARD OF OUTREACH UPDATES

The Board of Outreach is making plans to conduct a canvass of the homes in the community once each month to pass out brochures and cards. The first monthly canvass is scheduled for September 10th at 4:00PM. All Holy Cross members are invited to assist in the canvass. Next year a request will be made for a college student canvass team to come to Holy Cross during the end of May or the first part of June.

On August 29th, the Board of Outreach held its first free car wash (no donations accepted) as an outreach project to distribute sermon CDs and brochures, and to invite the people to attend worship services at Holy Cross. The Youth Group helped with the car wash and the preparation of the signs and supplies.

This coming year the Board of Outreach will be using an outreach mailing web site and goggle ads to reach those seeking a church home, rather than using the Chamber of Commerce web site..

Plans are being made to advertise the canvass for Holy Cross' Thanksgiving worship service followed by the Thanksgiving dinner at noon.

In addition to the Holy Cross web site address being posted on the church's permanent sign, the Board of Outreach is investigating the possibility of getting a sign to post out by the street once a month that also has the church's web site address. This will call more people's attention to the web site which proclaims God's Word.

RENOVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Renovation Committee has been asked by the Holy Cross Voters' Body to bring cost estimates to the October voters' meeting on renovation of the narthex, bathrooms, kitchen and fellowship area. The committee will be meeting on September 5th at 7:30AM to discuss how to accomplish this task. Several of the preliminary ideas the committee has formulated will be reviewed to determine the best and most economical means to accomplish the project. If you have any ideas, please pass these on to the Committee Chairman, Robert Barnett, or other committee members.

PIONEERS/YOUTH GROUP

The Pioneers/Youth Groups are making plans to go to the "2009 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Expo" at the Lazy E Arena in Guthrie on the 26th of September. Watch the Pioneers bulletin board at church and the worship bulletins for more information. If you would like information about the Expo and what it features, go to -- <http://lazuje.com/Expo2009.html>.

REPORT ON JULY VOTERS' MEETING

The Quarterly Voters' Body Meeting was held on July 26th following a pot luck dinner. Main items on the meeting agenda were the committee recommendations presented by the Board of Stewardship, and the purchase of playground equipment for the church grounds. The actions taken on the items fell into three categories: 1) The recommendation was approved; 2) the recommendation was tabled until the October Voters' Body Meeting; and 3) the recommendation was disapproved. The following is a summary of these actions:

1) Recommendations that were approved:

--A Norman, OK mission church to be started by Holy Cross congregation in January 2010.

--A Norman mission church fund be started immediately to help defray start up costs of the Norman mission church.

--Renovation Committee bring cost estimates to October Voters' Body Meeting on renovation of the narthex, bathrooms, kitchen and fellowship area.

--\$3,500 of \$10,000 anonymous gift be used to purchase playground equipment with the remainder of gift to be placed in the church Renovation/Expansion Fund.

--Terms of Norman Mission/Renovation/Education Committees be extended for as long as required to accomplish their goals.

--Norman Mission Committee be assigned to the Board of Outreach, the Renovation Committee be assigned to the Board of Property Management, and the Education Committee be assigned to the Board of Education.

2) Recommendations tabled until the October Voters' Body Meeting:

--Designate \$500 each month in the Holy Cross 2010 budget to aid the Norman mission church.

--Funds from Church Renovation/Expansion fund be used immediately to renovate the narthex, bathrooms, kitchen and fellowship area.

--Construct a "west wing" with offices and restrooms to begin within five years from January 1, 2010.
--Education Committee study feasibility of starting a Mother's Day Out/Preschool following construction of new education building.

3) Recommendations that were disapproved:

--Construct a new education building in two to three years from January 2010.
--Construct a new sanctuary to begin in 10 years from January 1, 2010.

Each board presented a report on its activities during the second quarter of the year. Membership business pertaining to members being received into membership of Holy Cross and those leaving Holy Cross membership were acted upon. The next Voters' meeting will be held October 25th. During the October meeting the election of officers and board members will be held and the 2010 budget will be presented.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Choir practice will begin on Wednesday, September 2nd at 7:00PM. All singers are encouraged to attend. All former choir members and all new members who would like to join in singing praises to the Lord, please reserve each Wednesday night for a two hour practice session.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

On Sunday, October 11th, Holy Cross will have the opportunity to celebrate Pastor Strackbein's 30th anniversary of service in the ministry. The day will start out with the normal regular Sunday School/Bible class and worship service in the morning. In the afternoon there will be a special thanksgiving celebration service at 5:00PM, with a pot luck dinner to follow. Pastor Philip Strackbein will be the guest speaker and Vicar Tom Strackbein will be the liturgist. Please be on the lookout for 1) a gift collection envelope; 2) a food sign-up sheet; and 3) an RSVP sign-up sheet to provide an estimate of how much food to prepare. What a blessing it will be for all to join in this celebration. The Committee

One Day Oklahoma Adventure - Saturday, October 24, 2009

The ladies of the Mary-Martha Guild are sponsoring a trip for all Holy Cross members and friends to Chisholm Trail Museum, Mt. Scott, and the Holy City at Lawton, OK. Transportation will be provided on a handicap passenger bus complete with restroom. Water will be provided on the bus. The bus will leave Holy Cross at 8:30AM. The cost is \$51 per person, which includes lunch, no matter what the age. You will only need to bring money to buy any souvenirs. Be sure to bring your camera.

The first stop will be in Chickasha, OK for a break. Then on to Marlow, OK to Chisholm Trail Museum. The exhibits consist of an exhibit gallery, a Chisholm Trail Experience Theater, the Garis Gallery of the American West, and a larger-than-life monument "On the Chisholm Trail." Then, at 12:30, it's Giuseppe's Italian Dining in Duncan, OK. For lunch you will choose from: spaghetti, pizza, lasagna, or one other main dish (not sure which one - will post it later). Lunch also comes with drink and dessert.

On to Lawton, OK to Mt. Scott and the Holy City. Mt. Scott is 2,464 ft. above sea level and Oklahoma's most prominent mountain. The Holy City of the Wichita's was built as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project during the 1930s. It is located on 110 acres. It was founded by Reverend Anthony Mark Wallock who viewed the Wichita Mountains as resembling the hills and mountains of the Holy Land. We will also visit the visitor's center.

If there is time after we leave the Holy City and visitor's center, we will stop at the Wildlife Refuge and Museum.

Then back to Chickasha for a rest break. So about 7:30-8:00PM we will be back at church. Lunch meat, cheese, bread and chips will be provided at church for anyone who wants to eat before going home.

The trip must be paid for by October 11, 2009. You can either pay Suzanne Piña or Joy Hahn.

Thank You Suzanne for arranging another fantastic 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.

JESUS, MY FRIEND
By Barb's mother, Delores Staats
1982 for her grandchildren

*I have a Friend in Jesus;
He wants to hear me pray.
To ask His help and guidance
Throughout this bright new day.*

*He sees me when I'm playing
And when I go to sleep;
He guards me from all danger,
Me in His care does keep.*

*He is my gentle Shepherd;
I am His little lamb.
Safe in His arms He holds me
And loves me as I am.*

*Oh, how I love You, Jesus
For You are my dear Friend;
I ask that You would bless me
And keep me to the end.*

SEPTEMBER GREETERS

Sept. 6 - Al & Carol Cardwell
Sept. 13 - Don & Darlene Chaddock
Sept. 20 - Tom & Janet Finney
Sept. 27 - Marlon & Karen Henry

SEPTEMBER CLEANING LIST

Sept. 5 - Shawn Stuever Family
Sept. 12 - Marlon & Karen Henry/Al & Carol Cardwell
Sept. 19 - Duane & Sunny Stuever/Butch & Bonnie Barnett
Sept. 26 - Eric & Diane Hanson

SEPTEMBER MOWING LIST

Sept. 5 - Ricky Poulin/Paul Barnett
Sept. 12 - John Deards/Al Cardwell
Sept. 19 - Jeff Glass/Joe Glass
Sept. 26 - Bill Shoumaker/Byron Shoumaker

NURSERY SCHEDULE

Nursery-Bible Study

Sept. 6 - Andrea Smith
Sept. 13 - Carole Peters
Sept. 20 - Andrea Smith
Sept. 27 - Regina Hahn

Nursery-Church Service

Will Peters
Everett Peters
Open
Open