

## PASTOR'S PENNINGS

### Sure and Certain of the Unseen

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1

It is amazing that with only a few clicks on a computer, we can dramatically alter photos. Such capabilities have led us to be a bit more wary. We find ourselves saying, “Unless I see it with my own eyes, how can I believe that it hasn't been touched up? I'll believe it when I see it.”

Often this cynical attitude can touch our spiritual life. How can I believe that God loves me and knows what is going on in my life considering all troubles and dis-appointments I have to deal with?

It doesn't take much for us to see where one of Jesus' own disciples was coming from when he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it” (John 20:25). I'll believe it when I see it.

That is in stark contrast to what we read in the Bible, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” How can we be sure and certain of things we can't see, can't prove?

Think of a father and child playing the game where the father stands behind the child and tells him to fall backwards. The child, unable to see his father, still trusts that he is there and is certain that his father won't let him hit the ground. The child leans back and falls, fully convinced that his father will keep his word and catch him, because his father has always proved trust-worthy.

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Though we did not see the creation or the crucifixion, though we were not present to witness the Savior rising from the Easter tomb, though we have not heard His actual voice forgiving our sins and promising His return, we believe.

How can we be so sure and certain? God's word is true and trustworthy. Our forgiveness is certain because Jesus did die and rise from the dead. God's love for us today and every day is sure. Every promise our Father has made about our eternal future, He will keep.

Faith is sure and certain of unseen things simply because it takes God at His word.

## PRAYER LIST

Romans 8:26 - "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."

\*\*This last month we prayed for rain several times and God answered us several times. Because conditions are still dry, please continue to include personal prayers for rain.

\*\*Last month two children, Tyler Schnell and Chase Chaddock went to the hospital. Tyler had his adenoids removed, a hernia repaired and tubes placed in his ears. Chase was evaluated for a possible blood disorder. Both are now home.

\*\*Among the adults, Gary Hahn had surgery to remove his gall bladder and Glen Albertson had a pacemaker surgically implanted. Both men have gone home again. Please pray that if it is God's will, the recovery period for all of these physical problems will be short.

\*\*Please keep Charlie Quam and Bev in your prayers. Charlie is not doing well and is at the VA center in Norman.

\*\*Please pray that if it is God's will, Pastor and Barb will make it back home again safely after their two week vacation to see their relatives.

\*\*Mount Olive in Tulsa is vacant at this time. Please pray that God would lead a qualified individual to accept the call to serve as Mt. Olive's pastor.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

The Stewardship Board is planning to use four of the five Sundays in October for this year's stewardship program. The theme will be "Christ's Love Our Calling: Different Gifts, Same Grace." Sub themes for each Sunday will be:

- A). Serving;
- B). Encouraging;
- C). Generosity; and
- D). Leadership

There will be three Thursday night Stewardship Bible studies emphasizing prophecy, teaching and mercy.

The Board is also planning to sponsor a new member pot luck and game night on September 25th at 5:00PM. Make sure to come and get to know better our new members.

The following is from a seminar that our Stewardship Chairman, Terry Eischen, attended last year. The out-line has been given in pieces as a part of each newsletter. This month's edition is called, "Plan For Year-round Stewardship Growth." Last month we covered point A. This time we continue with:

B. The Heart of Giving That Honors God--principles of giving Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" Matthew 6:21.

Perhaps the best application of this passage to regular life situations is to view love as an activity. This is viewed very vividly by Christ giving up His life for us on the cross. "We love because He first loved us" 1 John 4:19. If our love for God is first and foremost in our lives, then our treasures and our hearts will be centered on honoring God. This attitude of our hearts would then lead us to give our offerings as a first fruit of our labors.

Three guidelines for offerings:

1. Priority = first fruit giving (to God first and living wisely with the rest).

Malachi 1:6-8 - "If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty ... "When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor. Would he be pleased with you?" Also, Proverbs 3:9 - "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

2. Personal = freewill giving (each giving cheerfully from the heart).

2 Corinthians 9:7 - "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Also 1 Corinthians 16:2 "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

3. Proportional = beginning with an understanding of percentage giving.

1 Corinthians 16:2 - "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." and 2 Corinthians 8:12 - "... according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

What percentage should I offer?

Considering the tithe (10%+ of income) as an initial goal:

a) Matches the biblical example of giving from early on (Abraham, Jacob);

b) Useful as a benchmark for people of grace who see beyond the Old Testament Law requirements; and

c) Brings a new level of personal joy and blessing

“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty ... “Bring the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessings that you will not have room enough for it.” God through Malachi. (Malachi 3:7,10).

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Marcia Schroeder Whitney Welcome, Marcia! What a joy it is to have you once again in our spiritual family. May God bless you as you travel with us on our journey to glory!

Tamara Billing

Welcome to Holy Cross Tamara! We are so happy that God has led you to be a member here. We pray that your stay with us will be one that leads you to grow in your Christian faith through the Word and Sacrament God provides for you here.

## **EVANGELISM**

Our Outreach Board has two things on the agenda. Number one is a seminar presented by WELS Pastors on Evangelism. It is called a “School of Outreach” and will be held in Lowell, AR at Grace Lutheran Church beginning at 10:00AM on Saturday, September 3rd. A carload of people will be attending from Holy Cross. A one-time fee has been paid for the whole congregation, so the more people who attend the better stewards we will be of our money. There shouldn't be any other expenses except to help with the car costs of traveling. The following four presentations will be made at Lowell: Mission of the Church, Organization and Planning, Locating Prospects, and Nurturing. The seminar should be an exciting day. Pray about it and see if attending this would help you be a better witness of your faith.

There are four phases to the new School of Outreach:

Phase 1: The Board will have prepared for the program by completing a Congregational Profile and Community Profile. Congregational leaders and members will gather at Lowell for a one-day workshop at which there will be presentations on Evangelism Organization & Planning and Outreach Strategies (Locating and Nurturing Prospects). Breakout sessions with trained advisors will begin the process for developing an annual outreach plan with specific strategies.

Phase 2: One of the presenters will stay in contact with Holy Cross after the initial workshop, specifically to assist us in the implementation of what the members discussed in their private workshops.

Phase 3: After several months, a second plenary work-shop will be conducted with presentations on Friendship Witnessing, Church Identity in the Community, Worship Welcome and Assimilation. In breakout sessions with their advisors, congregational leaders will explore ways for accomplishing these important aspects of their evangelism program.

Phase 4: Advisors will keep in contact with congregations for several months to offer help and resources.

The second thing the Board is planning is to set up a program that will hopefully encourage each of us to attempt to bring more people into Pastor's next Adult Confirmation Class (Bible Information Class) which hope-fully will start in October. The plan is called "The Andrew Plan." Andrew is the one who introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. The concept is very simple:

1. All members consider going through an adult confirmation class with Pastor. Pastor will try to

hold three such classes per year.

2. When a member comes to a BIC class he may do his or her best to enroll a non-churched friend and sponsor the person at the class and

later continue to sponsor the person when, or if, he or she starts coming to the church service.

We are hoping to begin the next BIC class at the end of September or the first part of October. Think and pray about asking a non-churched friend to accompany you to the class.

## **CONFIRMATION CLASS**

Confirmation starts up again this month. This year there will be three high school freshmen, Allison Evans, Stefan Paxton, and Tom Shoenborn. God willing they will be confirmed at the end of this year. Entering the 7th grade class will be Cole Oestreich and Destiny Barnett. There are a couple more who are eligible but who have not yet signed up as of the date of this writing. Please keep them in your prayers and greet them after church. Ask how their classes are going. In short, give them a lot of positive attention. Bible History classes for the 7th graders and Catechism classes for the highschoolers will begin on September 11th.

## **MARY-MARTHA GUILD**

The Mary-Martha ladies will be holding their regular meeting each month on the second Saturday starting September 10th at 9:30AM. Each meeting consists of Bible study, project work, a business meeting, and church cleaning. All ladies of Holy Cross congregation are invited to attend for a morning of Christian fellow-ship. The fall Women's Retreat will be held in Lowell, AR on September 23rd and 24th. Please see Joy Hahn for additional information.

## **THANK YOU-GRACIAS-DANKE SCHOEN**

Once again through your generosity I was able to attend the "Worship, Music, and The Arts" conference held in St. Peter, MN, July 19-22. The worship services were uplifting and the workshops were beneficial. This year we spent two full days on the MLC campus in New Ulm and had a chance to worship in the new Chapel of The Christ.

I had the honor of being part of the 120 voice Festival Choir. This choir officially opens the conference with a Tuesday evening concert. What a grand experience to sing the Lord's praises with such a group.

This conference is but a small foretaste of what it will be like in heaven to worship with a large band of believers, and from the bottom of my heart I thank you for allowing me the privilege of attending.

Yours in Christ, Sunny Stuever

## **MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS**

The Monday night Bible class will not be meeting on the first two Mondays of September. The class will resume on Monday, September 19th at 6:30PM. Studies will continue as outlined in the book "More Prepared To Answer" by author Mark A. Paustain.

## **FALL FESTIVAL**

Plans are being made to have this year's Fall Festival on October 29th. An organizational meeting is scheduled for September 11th. A sign-up sheet has been posted on the church bulletin board for those to sign who would like to help organize the festival.

## **TALENT SHEETS**

Talent sheets, to be filled out by all members of Holy Cross congregation, have been handed out to members by the ushers after the past three Sunday worship services. If you have not received a talent sheet, please ask an usher for one. The information on these sheets is used by the Board of Stewardship to contact members who have a special talent that may be used in

the service of the Lord. Please return your talent sheets to an usher or place it in Cliff Gallarneau's church mail box.

### **THE CHOIR NEEDS YOU**

If you have ever thought about being part of Holy Cross' choir, this is the year to make it happen. We will start a little later this year, so mark your calendars for Wednesday, September 14th at 7:00PM. Practices will be from 7:00-9:00PM each Wednesday night.

See you in the balcony! Sunny

### **GRACE NEWS**

Grace is worshipping at a new location. The new location is located at 3750 W. Main St. in Norman. It is located in the Catering Creations Event Center behind the Bank of America and Fed Ex Kinko's buildings at Main Street and NW 36th Street. If you need help locating the building, please feel free to e-mail or call Craig Ballinger at 615-1340.

Now that summer is over, attendance is picking up again. Applications have been made for Kingdom Workers to fund a WELS individual or couple to work at outreach in the Norman area for a three month period of time. We are awaiting confirmation or denial of the request.

### **NOMINATION COMMITTEE**

A Nominating Committee will be formed this month. The Nominating Committee will be calling all voting members of Holy Cross congregation in September asking them to serve as a church officer or board member during the coming year. Prayerfully consider it an opportunity to serve as an officer or a board member.

### **MARRIAGE RETREAT**

A WELS marriage retreat, "Best Friends For Life" will be held Friday through Sunday, September 9-11 at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Universal City, TX (near San Antonio), by Pastors Don Patterson and Nate Buege. The retreat begins at 8:00PM Friday evening and ends Sunday morning with a worship service at 10:30AM. The cost is \$20.00 per couple. Couples are responsible for their own lodging. For more information and to register go on line at [www.ursaved.com](http://www.ursaved.com). Talk to Tony and Sheila Taylor about their experience at this seminar last year.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER INSTALLATION**

Classes for Sunday School will rotate on September 18th. An installation of the teachers will occur during the service on that same Sunday. There is a sign-up sheet on the west wall

bulletin board for any child wishing to receive training through our Sunday School program. Sunday School is very important for our children: 1) Because it feeds their souls at a level they can understand; and 2) It prepares them for confirmation classes with Pastor.

### **MINUTE TO WIN**

You have probably seen the show on television a “Minute to Win It” and thought I can do better than that. Well, now is your chance to see how well you can do. On September 25th, following a 5:00PM pot luck dinner, the Board of Stewardship will be giving you the opportunity. They will provide all the necessary equipment and all you need to provide is the talent. Plans are to award prizes to those who can master the challenges of the game. So for a lot of eating, fun, and fellowship mark September 25th, 5:00PM on your calendar.

### **PASSAGES EXHIBIT**

This multi-media exhibition is for all ages and tracks the translation of the Bible through the ages. It features some of the most rare Bibles in all the world. There are treasures from the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient manuscripts, early printed materials, a portion of the Gutenberg Bible, and multiple editions of the English Bible through the King James version. Three hundred artifacts are on display with each guest receiving an iPod touch free to use to tour the exhibit with expert commentary. This isn't just an exhibit but an experience. See this show at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art and check it out online at:

<http://www.explorepassages.com>

Mr. Christian Eisenbeis will lead the group and provide additional comments on the exhibit. Plans are being made for members of Holy Cross and friends to attend the exhibit on Saturday, September 3rd at 10:00AM. A sign-up sheet has been provided on the church bulletin board for those wishing to attend so arrangements may be made. The admission price will be determined by the number of people who attend. For additional information contact Tony Taylor.

### **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 - SEPTEMBER GREETERS**

Sept. 4 - Paul & Aimee Barnett

Sept. 11 - Tom & Janet Finney

Sept. 18 - Gene & Ada Hill

Sept. 25 - Mike & Latischa Huller

### **HC - SEPTEMBER CLEANING LIST**

Sept. 3 - Patti Buczynskyj/Ann Bailey

Sept. 10 - Mary-Martha Guild

Sept. 17 - Amanda Kis/Doug Hahn & Family

Sept. 24 - Trevor Oestreich/Laura Lunsford

### **HC - SEPTEMBER MOWING LIST**

Sept. 3 - Robert Barnett/Butch Barnett

Sept. 10 - Bill Shoumaker/Byron Shoumaker

Sept. 17 - Scott Peters & Sons

Sept. 24 - Kris Timm/Andy Quam

### **SYNOD CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS**

During the week of July 25th, Scott Peters was one of the more than 400 voting and advisory delegates who met at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, WI, for the 61st Biennial Convention of the Synod. In addition to experiencing the uplifting worship services and devotions and hearing two fine doctrinal essays, the delegates spent a full week reviewing the work of the Synod during the past two years and making decisions on a number of important issues. Some of the items discussed are as follows:

#### **The Ministry Financial Plan (Budget)**

Delegates approved a ministry financial plan for the next two years that will make possible the opening of four to six new home missions, the expansion of staffing and programs in our world mission fields, the continued programs of called workers training at our ministerial education schools, and a modest increase in Synodical salaries (2% and 2.5% in the next two

years following two years of wage freezes). The budget recommended by the Synodical Council and approved by the convention provides for careful expansion of our Synod's work, especially in the area of missions.

The Synod's capital debt has been reduced from \$22.4 million in 2007 to \$11.6 million today. The budget provides for continuing payments to eliminate the Synod's capital debt in eight years.

#### Bible Translation

After working for nearly a year, the Translation Evaluation Committee reported to the convention its initial conclusions are that the revised New International Version (NIV) can be acceptable for use in Synodical publications. (The current version of the NIV is being phased out by the publisher and will no longer be available for use in Synod publications.) In an open hearing, many delegates expressed thanks for the committee's work and for its clear commitment to up-holding the truth of the Scriptures. Some delegates expressed concerns and reservations about the revised NIV and spoke in favor of considering other options. No final decision was expected at this convention, and the committee was not making a final recommendation. The convention determined that a final selection of a translation for Synod publications should be done at the district conventions in 2012, with a two-thirds majority of all delegates necessary to adopt a translation. The convention also resolved that a special committee should be appointed to investigate the feasibility of WELS taking part in an effort to produce a new confessional Lutheran translation of the Bible.

Resolutions were adopted on "Continuing Education," Time of Grace Ministry along with adopting the "In Christ Alone" plan which provides the Synod with a road map for the next six years. The convention called for the appointment of a special task force to address the challenges facing Lutheran schools and to report their conclusions and recommendations to the districts in 2012. For complete information on the 2011 convention go online to [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention).

#### **THE U IN JESUS**

Before U were thought of or time had begun,

God stuck U in the name of His Son.

And each time U pray, you'll see it's true,

You can't spell out JesUs and not include U.

You're a pretty big part of His wonderful name,

For U, He was born, that's why He came.  
And His great love for U is the reason He died,  
It even takes U to spell crUcified.  
Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand  
He rose from the dead, with U in His plan?  
The stones split away, the gold trUmpet blew,  
And this word resUrrection is spelled with a U.  
When JesUs left earth at His upward ascension,  
He felt there was one thing He just had to mention.  
'Go into the world and tell them it's true  
That I love them all - Just like I love U.'  
So many great people are spelled with a U,  
Don't they have a right to know JesUs too?  
It all depends now on what U will do,  
He'd like them to know, But it all starts with U.  
Will YOU pass it on  
When JesUs died on the cross  
He was thinking of you.