

If You Were a Stranger, What Would You Think ?

Five times in Paul's and Peter's New Testament letters Christians are told to greet one another with a *Holy Kiss*. Kelly Ayers is a classmate of Tim's at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley. Preaching on the holy kiss she began:

"I pictured individuals swathed in yards of homespun material, muted colors, maybe a sash or two, they basically look like they stepped out of the painting of the last supper. Their eyes meet across the room. They make the biblical equivalent of a gang sign to show they're from the same crew, cross the room in slow mo as dramatic music builds to a crescendo. They've confirmed they're of the same cloth, but to be sure they begin a series of secret handshake moves: hand slapping, pinky linking, snapping and they end with a Saturday Night Fever disco move. After a sufficient proof that they are indeed on the same side they exchange the holy kiss. The build up was too much. It's just a kiss of familiarity, but then the heavens open; golden light pours down and an angel choir sings "AHHHH!". So there you have it, my imagination's version of the 'holy kiss'.

"I knew I wasn't right, but I was intrigued, why [would Paul and Peter tell Christians to] greet each other with a holy kiss? What does this concept have to do with [Sunday worship]? Studying the ritual of the holy kiss brought to light something that always stands out to me about the Trinity: God is defined by relationships. God the Father is not some swinging single who got creation going out of boredom. The way we read the Gospel of John's "*In the beginning was the Word,*" we believe the Son was present when the world was created as was the Spirit. God the Father does not exist alone. God the creator is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit altogether. God exists as a fellowship of persons interacting with mutual love. The persons of God are in a relationship with one another, but God reaches out with creative force and love that invites all who are created into a relationship with God and one another. The holy kiss highlights how God's relationship spills over into our world.

"The kiss Paul suggests was not merely a benign, assumed part of his culture; it wasn't the equivalent of a handshake. The holy kiss was scandalous, but not because it was meant to be inappropriate or provocative. It was scandalous, because it redefined relationships. In Paul's time you could only kiss members of your family. By inviting believers to greet each other with a holy kiss, Paul was making the radical statement that in God they were family. Through baptism we are invited into the family of God, and boundaries we have so carefully constructed are broken. God's love removes every division we can name: blood relations, age, neighborhoods, political beliefs, towns, age, cities, race, states, sexual orientation, countries, gender, regions or hemispheres. We are all family, no exceptions. We are brothers and sisters in Christ."

The Worship Committee asks you to consider the scandal of the Holy Kiss and make the stranger and the fellow member know that Passing the Peace is an expression of FAMILY that includes but does not scare the stranger. Would strangers to our church think something solemn was happening, or would

Continued on next page...



It's a Movie Night!

The TLC Women's Group is meeting Wednesday, August 6th at the church for a movie, and suggestions are being accepted. Comedy? Drama? Sci-Fi? Adventure? Probably not a horror movie... Give Karen Lehman some titles, and let her know if you can come – that way we know how much popcorn to make!

The TLC Women's Group meets on the first Wednesday of even-numbered months – or would you prefer a different day of the week? Tell Karen your preference in that department too!



Save the Date!

Saturday afternoon, September 27

it's the

TLC Community Garden Harvest Festival Picnic

Plan to join with gardeners, members of the congregation and friends.
Celebrate the harvest! Celebrate community!

We are stepping out in faith and counting on abundant tomatoes, from which we'll make a huge batch of gazpacho.

We'll be asking those who come to bring a picnic dish to share from their garden's bounty, or other local, seasonal sources.

More details soon!



continued from first page...

they think this was break-time for having a little fun? It might also be scary for a stranger to think that 60+ people are coming at me and a bunch of them are huggers!

Another scriptural basis is Matthew 5:23: *"If you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your sister or brother has a grudge against you, leave your gift there at the altar. Go to be reconciled to them, and then come and offer your gift."* Before we put our offerings in the collection plate and bring the bread and wine to the communion table, we share the peace that our Savior Jesus has brought to us. Being mindful of the *family* soon to be gathered around the Communion Table may help us to keep the Passing of the Peace joyful but a little more solemn.

Paul Feiertag

Getting to Know...

Ray Brandt and Sharon Boschen

TLC is fortunate to gain two new members, Ray and Sharon, each with interesting backgrounds. Who to present first? Let's go with Ray because at age 92 he is our second-oldest member, just a year behind Clint Berg.

Ray was born in Healdsburg and is a 1934 graduate of Geyserville High School. He was a catcher/first baseman on the baseball team. Later, he went to a St. Louis Cardinals tryout camp, competing with hundreds of young men. Each day resulted in many players being cut. But Ray is proud that he lasted a whole week before they told him to go home. Some years later Ray played for the Healdsburg Prune Packers (it was your loss, Cardinals).

After a year at Sweets Business College, he became a mail carrier with the Post Office. He was a clerk during WW2 until he entered the Marine Corps in 1945. Following duty in Hawaii, he went back to the Santa Rosa Post Office. There, he moved up through the ranks to Assistant Postmaster, and then . . . yes . . . Postmaster! Ray ran the operation for 7 years, then retired in 1972. (I wonder if he ever gave orders to Mary Dawson . . . that, I would like to see!)

In retirement, Ray stayed active for many years with various outdoorsman-type activities, including hunting and fishing. Today, he is Sharon's "gardener" and offers daily baseball advice to the Giants while listening to all of their games.

Ray was married in 1937 and is a widower. Both daughters live in Santa Rosa.

Sharon is descended from five close family relatives who were all Lutheran pastors, including her father. As such, the family moved to parishes in Nebraska, Iowa, and Arizona after her birth in Glenvil, NE. Following high school graduation, she went to Hastings College and earned a B.A. in English.

Sharon came to Santa Rosa in 1968 and began teaching kindergarten at Lincoln Elementary School. She later moved on to Mark West where she was Principal from 1988-2003. Along the way she completed two M.A. degrees: Childhood Education and Educational Administration. She continued serving schools as President of the Santa Rosa City School Board.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church was Sharon's first stop in Santa Rosa where she was a member for 40 years until joining TLC this July. She was attracted to TLC by our RIC designation. She finds this to be accurate and is also impressed with our vitality and with Pastor Jean. Sharon and Ray have even joined Nifty Fifties!

At Bethlehem, Sharon did everything. She was the first female Council President and has held every Council position except Property. She began and directed the Children's Choir. Sometimes they even paid her . . . as when she was Lay Minister for Visitation. Sometimes she even went beyond Bethlehem . . . as when she was President of Sierra Pacific ELCA Women.

Sharon married John in 1972, and changed her role from Youth Director to "Mom" to her step-son, John L. Boschen. Daughter Laura was born in 1973. John passed away in 2003, just a year after Sharon was diagnosed with Lymphoma. Her cancer is in remission and her health is good. I believe I could detect a hint of "willingness" to participate in TLC's growth!

Currently, she is training to walk/run in half marathons for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society and is Honoree Captain for the marathon team. Regular time is spent as a Care-giver for Memorial Hospice. Sometimes, Sharon even finds time for reading fiction and non-fiction, plus theater and opera.

It was at age 88 when Ray summoned the courage to plant a kiss on Sharon for the first time. She reports that the quality was disappointing. But she accepted the challenge to do some "instructing" and he improved very quickly!

George Land

Sierra Pacific Synod Installs Bishop

REV. MARK HOLMERUD WAS INSTALLED AS A BISHOP IN THE CHURCH in a splendid liturgical service on Saturday, July 12, at St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Sacramento. Pastor Jean and I (Paul Feiertag) wore our albs and red stoles and lined up outside the church with well over 100 other clergy. The service began with a rite of Thanksgiving for Baptism. One of my friends, Rev. Robyn Hartwig, carried the Processional Cross and led us into the church singing "Gather Us In". There were so many of us vested clergy that all the space for clergy was packed with more coming. A door was opened up front, and vested clergy disappeared—probably to a lower level where the overflow people followed the service with the aid of speakers and video screens.

Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Mark Hanson, took his place in the chancel assisted by a laywomen, Ms. Angela Nickerson, Director of Congregational Discipleship at St. John's, and by Rev. Nancy Nelson, who was runner-up in the election for Bishop. The organist added to the splendor of worship, and a pianist had composed special music for the song "Canticle of Turning" dedicated to Bishop Holmerud and sung skillfully by St. John's Contemporary Ensemble. One of the lessons was read in Spanish. Bishop Hanson preached forcefully and prophetically on the Gospel of Matthew parable of The Judgment. Response to the sermon was occasionally vocal, however, a great roar and applause arose when Bishop Hanson said that he was looking for our Synod under Bishop Holmerud's leadership to show the whole ELCA that full inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons can take place and be good for the whole church. That assembled body was ready to put the whole issue of human sexuality in the church behind us. We were in awe of Holy Spirit's wind and fire.

Our Bishop was formally installed by Presiding Bishop Hanson, and about ten other ELCA and Episcopal Bishops (active and retired) laid hands on him. We prayed mightily for him before he was given the Bishop's cross to wear and the crozier to mark his shepherding ministry among us.

Music by G. F. Handel, "Sing praise to God; New songs of joy break forth. Resound through Zion; Sing unending joy", prepared us for the celebration of the Eucharist. Our Christ present, solemn joy, unity in Christ's body and blood, nourishment for our journeys.

After the final Blessing and the Sending Song, "We Are Called", Bishop Holmerud announced that Rev. Nancy Nelson had accepted the call to be Associate to the Bishop. This first staff appointment was greeted with loud cheers because so many had voted for her to be bishop at the assembly. He is off to a gracious and understanding beginning. We hope TLC has an opportunity to welcome him or Associate to the Bishop Nancy Nelson very soon.

Paul Feiertag



Ingrid Feiertag	8/1
Nathan McPherson	8/2
Colleen Sass	8/3
Jim Lehman	8/4
Gloria Feiertag	8/13
Mark Netherda	8/19
George Hurley	8/20
Natasha McKenney	8/20
Bill Baggett	8/26
Alex Netherda	8/26
Griffin Becker	8/26
Dave Flanagan	8/31

CCC* NEWS

Thanks all of you for the items we were collecting for the **World Relief Packages**. You were more than generous!!! Thanks to your overwhelming participation, **We exceeded our goal of 75**. Just to let you know, none of the overflow items will be going to waste. They will go to the Living Room** and YWCA Women's shelter. We have planned a time for everyone to participate in the assembling of the packets (see Sandy Koppen's article, below) and enjoy a good time while doing it. Also look at a recognition item sent by the ELCA World Relief for our support posted on the Kiosk in the entryway at TLC.

A couple of items that might be of interest to you this month are posted on the Kiosk also. The Redwood Gospel Mission is holding their **City Kids Festival on Saturday, August 23**. The information and needs are posted. The YWCA is holding a **Women's Rights Celebration at Paradise Ridge Winery on August 26th** and that information is also posted on the Kiosk.

AGAIN – THANK YOU-THANK YOU – FOR MAKING THIS CCC PROJECT SUCH A SUCCESS!

*Congregation & Communittee Care

**The county's only daytime shelter for homeless and at-risk women and their children, located in Santa Rosa.



What do you have when Ice Cream and your favorite Toppings get together with Soap, Towels, Toothbrushes, & Combs?

A-Lutheran-World-Relief-Kit-Making-Ice-Cream-Social!

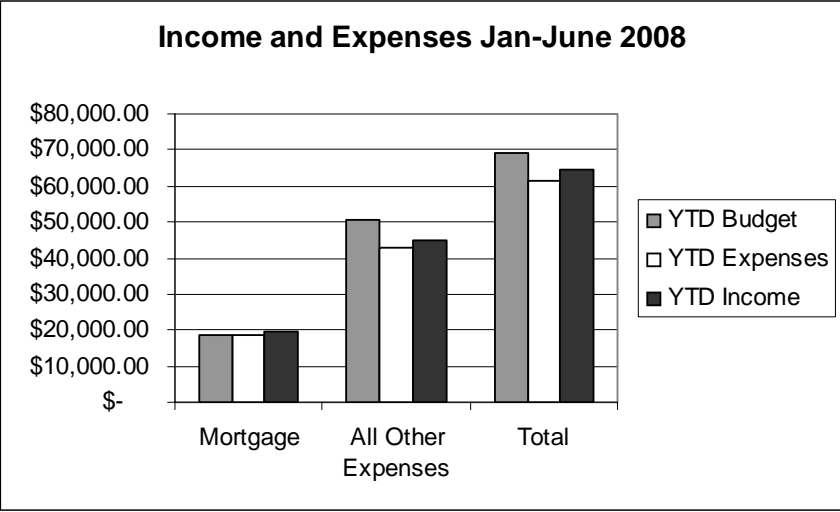
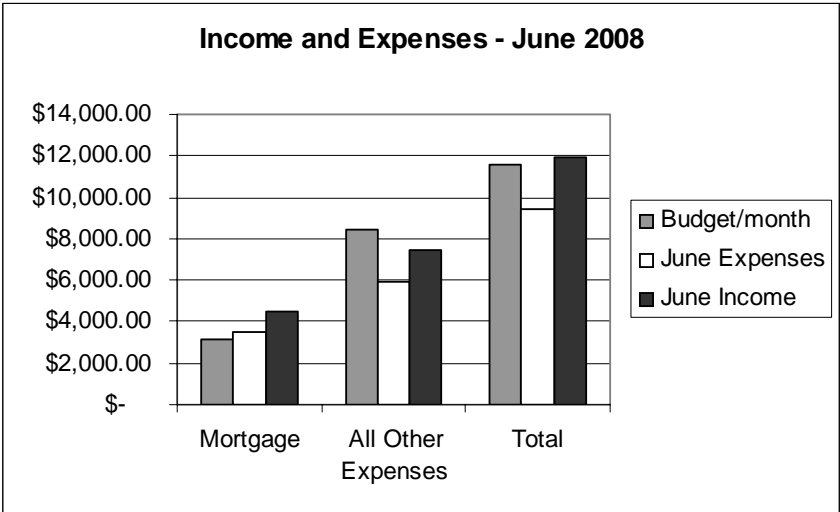
Date: **Sunday, September 7, 2008**

Time and Place: **3:00 pm at Church**

Who: **Everyone, young and old, who would like to help assemble a Lutheran World Relief Health Kit or who just likes ice cream—so that means YOU!**

We've been collecting supplies all summer, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is providing funds for the needed hand towels and washcloths, so now the Congregation and Community Committee (CCC) invites you to join us to help assemble our Lutheran World Relief Health Kits (75 of them!) and enjoy each other's company with an ice cream social. **CCC will provide the ice cream, and each attendee is invited to bring a favorite topping to share.** You'll have the opportunity to assemble a kit yourself, enjoy some ice cream, and learn a bit about what will happen to our kits after they are shipped off to the Lutheran World Relief warehouse. So be sure and save the date—we'll see you there!





*Notes: YTD Budget figures reflect \$3100/month mortgage payments for all of 2008. Mortgage payment for January 2008 was actually still an “interest only” payment; payments for March, April and May are \$3100/month, and June-December payments will be \$3400/month. June mortgage expenses include special contributions designated for mortgage principal reduction.



Hearts On Fire: Lutherans Concerned Assembly 2008

by Paul Feiertag

I attended the four-day assembly at San Francisco State University July 2-6 as an unofficial (paying my own expenses) representative of Thanksgiving Church. Every Reconciling in Christ congregation was urged to send representatives for information on the programs, inspiration from the fellowship and worship and to gain expertise in support of LGBT members' issues in local congregations and communities. Tim and I roomed together in one of the university dorm rooms. He was required to come a day early for the planning, and I was part of the volunteer crew helping with registration and guiding people to the right locations.

Worship is the primary focus of Lutherans Concerned assemblies. There were multiple opportunities for worship each day led by one or more of the assigned chaplains. Spiritual pain is part of every day life for those who are a misunderstood and often despised minority of the population. The gifts of the Spirit were everywhere in evidence - in the music, innovative liturgies, and powerful—even humorous—preaching to heal those hurts and live freely in Christ.

What does this have to do with us at TLC? Nothing ended when TLC was presented with the certificate declaring TLC to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation. That was just the beginning of a new focus of ministry in our community. However, we seem to have stalled, perhaps thinking that the rainbow flag stickers on the church signs should be enough. What would be great is for two or three people to get excited about real effective ministry to LGBT people. Lutherans Concerned/North America offers RIC training sessions several times a year throughout the country. One is scheduled in Glendale, CA, September 19–21. Can two or three of us put those dates on our calendars?

People who have GLBT family members or friends find it extremely helpful to come together and share their journeys with each other. We experienced enough of this earlier to know that it would very healing and bonding. The Council passed a resolution on same-gender marriages at TLC that will be publicized so that gay folk know that TLC is ready to welcome them. We are no longer the only RIC congregation in the North Bay. Marin Lutheran in Corte Madera is now also an RIC congregation. The San Francisco Lutherans Concerned Chapter is holding its summer meeting in Novato on August 17 to encourage us to attend. There is some interest in forming a Lutherans Concerned North Bay Chapter. What a resource that would be! One resource that came from the assembly is a critique of the Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality that can be used by groups and individuals to send improvements to the ELCA Task Force before the final draft is adopted at Churchwide Assembly next year.

Our newly elected Bishop Mark Holmerud is leading by example. He attended all four days at the Hearts on Fire Assembly listening and getting to know the people who are working to bring the whole ELCA into the reality that the people of God include those who just happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Come. Follow the leader.

“My People Have Forsaken the Living Water, and Dug Broken Cisterns” Jeremiah 2:13

Are you searching for contentment?

It's easy to be content when things in life are going your way. But how often does that happen? The Bible says we are to practice being “happy at any time in everything” (Php 4:12), because if you put your life on hold waiting for what you want to happen, you may be waiting a long time! Epicurus said, “Don't spoil what you have, by desiring what you don't have. Remember that what you now have, was the thing you once hoped for”.

Three things constantly feed our discontentment: (1) Greed, When you dwell on what you don't have, you're not enjoying what God's already given you. Be satisfied! Setting goals is good, but stop focusing so hard on the end result and learn to rejoice in the Lord while you're on your way. (2) Fear. It wants you to run from something that's not chasing you. It's the enemy's way of (a) robbing you of peace and stability, (b) tormenting you with the “What if's”; (c) keeping you from trusting God. The Psalmist said. “In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” (Ps 56:4). (3) Seeking satisfaction in the wrong places. God said, “My people forsaken the living water and dug broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” It's said that we spend our first 50 years searching for security, and the rest of our lives looking for significance. But we don't have to. The hymn writer wrote, “Now none but Christ can satisfy; no other name for me. There's love, life, and lasting joy, Lord Jesus found in Thee!” Are you searching for contentment? Try Jesus!

GOD DOESN'T GIVE US OUR GREED – HE GIVES US OUR NEED

From the K-Love Radio devotional series, submitted by Judy Sawyer



Another gem from Judy...

NINE REQUISITES FOR CONTENTED LIVING:

HEALTH ENOUGH TO MAKE WORK A PLEASURE.

WEALTH ENOUGH TO SUPPORT YOUR NEEDS.

STRENGTH TO BATTLE WITH DIFFICULTIES AND OVERCOME THEM.

GRACE ENOUGH TO CONFESS YOUR SINS AND FORSAKE THEM.

PATIENCE ENOUGH TO TOIL UNTIL SOME GOOD IS ACCOMPLISHED.

CHARITY ENOUGH TO SEE SOME GOOD IN YOUR NEIGHBOR.

LOVE ENOUGH TO MOVE YOU TO BE USEFUL AND HELPFUL TO OTHERS.

FAITH ENOUGH TO MAKE REAL THE THINGS OF GOD.

HOPE ENOUGH TO REMOVE ALL ANXIOUS FEARS CONCERNING THE FUTURE.

GOETHE (1749-1832)

Stewardship Snippets

Gift of GAB (God's Abundant Blessings) July 20, 2008

I knew a man who was born in Germany. He was baptized as an infant, grew up, married, came to America. Lived here in Santa Rosa. Was an alcoholic. He was among the first people to join AA when it started here in Santa Rosa. He had great stories to tell about his drinking days. One of his favorite and mine too, was about coming home late one night, having had a pint in his back pocket, falling down, breaking the pint and cutting his derriere. In the morning when he got up his wife asked him if he had had any problems the night before. Sheepishly he told her about falling with the pint in his pocket and cutting himself. There is a long pause and then his wife says, "that explains the mercurochrome and Band-Aids on the bathroom mirror." This man would go on to say that he believed that Baptism saved his life because God never gave up on him. He understood that we are a baptized, died for people, that life is a gift and requires something of us and from us.

The church is a funny organization. It doesn't survive on the profits it makes from selling something, instead it depends on each one of us to give our fair share and when we do, lights come on, water flows, heat warms us, we have a pastor, insurance to protect us, the mortgage goes down, children are taught, music is heard, folks are welcomed, faith is proclaimed, and more.

There is more - through our offerings we go all over the world. Lutheran World Relief, one of the helping agencies in the world is there for us. They are in China comforting parents who have lost their children in an earthquake, they are in Myanmar cleaning up the debris and comforting folks after the terrible storms there. They are able to do this because they know how to get into places when governments can't. Our hands are reaching to the starving people in Africa and caring for the thousands of folks that are battling AIDS in that continent as well. The lists of the places around the world where our offerings are helping is long and impressive. We should not be afraid to tell others about this.

Here in the United States we have something called Lutheran Social Services. Did you know that Lutheran Social Services is the largest social service agency in the country? Larger than the Red Cross? We should feel good about this, but we are Lutherans and it is hard for us to brag! It is like what Garrison Keillor says about Lutherans and the instruments they play in an orchestra - a Lutheran would never play first violin, you might have to play a solo and draw attention to yourself and that would never do.

Let me tell you a bit about what LSS does, so you can know the scope of our ministry. In Iowa among other things LSS is an adoption agency. Flak and I have first hand knowledge of this since both of our children were adopted through them. Thank you LSS. In Sacramento, California LSS has a program for single mothers and their children. There is a safe place to live, day care for the children, classes for the moms in grocery shopping, managing money, work skills, etc. Periodically there are graduations and a mom and her child or children are sent on their way ready to be productive members of society. We can imagine what a great event this is for everyone involved in this program. In Oakland LSS is starting a halfway house for kids who are 18 and no longer able to be in foster care, but need some guidance. I am sure if we talked to kids who have been in foster care and then at 18 are turned loose, we would hear some horror stories. We are glad that LSS has started this program and we are there with them through our offerings. In San Francisco LSS is serving 1800 folks with AIDS, they manage their money, have them housed in hotels around the city, pay their rent, make sure they take their medications, that they eat well, etc. This is not easy work - these folks are not always nice. But you and I are there through LSS and our offerings.

So the question becomes - If God were in charge of our finances, would we use our finances differently - would our fair share of the work of the church be the same as it is now - or not? Whatever decision we come to, let me say thank you on behalf of Thanksgiving Lutheran Church, the Sierra Pacific Synod, the ELCA, Lutheran World Relief, and Lutheran Social Services. Because we have given, much will be done here and around the world. Keep up the good work!!



Third Step Prayer of Dr. Bob

Dear God, I'm sorry about the mess I've made of my life. I want to turn away from all the wrong things I've ever done and all the wrong things I've ever been. Please forgive me for it all. I know You have the power to change my life and can turn me into a winner. Thank You, God, for getting my attention long enough to interest me in trying it Your way.

God, please take over the management of my life and everything about me. I am making this conscious decision to turn my will and my life over to Your care and am asking You to please take over all parts of my life. Please, God, move into my heart. However You do it is Your business, but make Yourself real inside me and fill my awful emptiness. Fill me with your love and Holy Spirit and make me know Your will for me. And now, God help Yourself to me and keep on doing it. I'm not sure I want You to, but do it anyhow.

I rejoice that I am now a part of Your people, that my uncertainty is gone forever, and that You now have control of my will and my life. Thank You and I praise Your name. Amen.

From the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous

Pastor Jean Lebbert 707-327-6292
Church office: 707-544-0241

Worship:

Sunday morning at 9:30 with Holy Communion

Thanksgiving Lutheran Church

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On the web:

www.thanksgivinglutheran.org

TLC Council:

Deb Ferronato, Congregation President

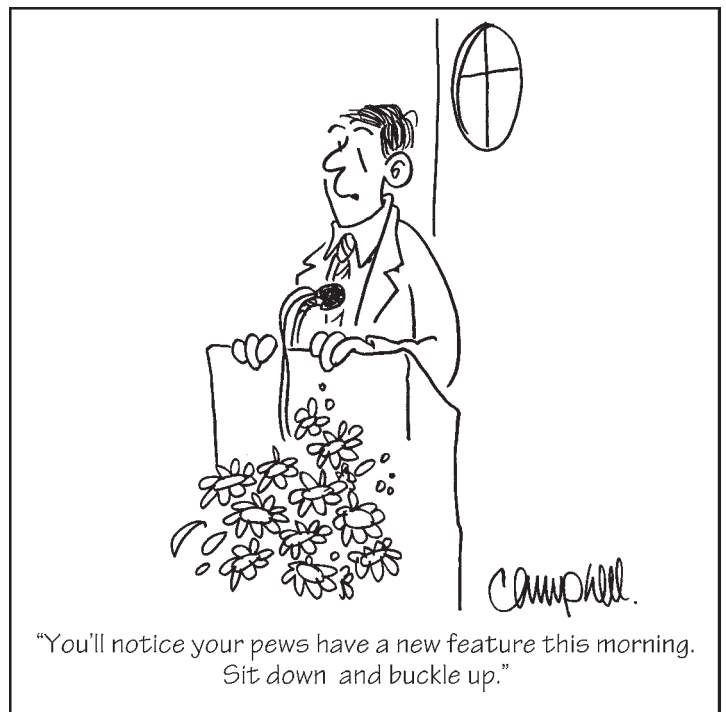
Dave Flanagan, Vice President

Jan Thomas, Secretary

Sandy Koppen

Jean Harrison

Jean Flak



Next Trumpet Deadline!

The next TLC Trumpet deadline will be Thursday, August 28. Editor requests articles be no longer than 500 words, and using 12 point Arial font is a plus! Please email submissions to:

editor@thanksgivinglutheran.org

If you do not have email, place submissions (along with your name in case any clarification is needed) in the "Lehman" mailbox at TLC by Sunday, August 24.