

My Friend Janie's Church Trial

I spent an hour from 5:30 to 6:30 this morning reading the eleven pages of the Presbyterian Church USA decision in the case against my friend and colleague Janie Spahr. I tried my best to understand the wording of the decision. It is certainly a mixed bag of the special language used by attorneys to allow for Janie to live out her faith relationship to Jesus the Christ among and on behalf of marginalized GLBT Christians in desperate need of justice; and the PCUSA on the other hand demanding the authority over her to define the boundaries in which Janie can operate. The most amazing claim to me was their assertion that they have the right to bind Janie's conscience to their statements adopted by majority vote when even those who wrote this decision were not in total agreement and availed themselves of the privilege of dissent on the closing pages thus freeing their consciences from what the majority had written.

The PCUSA had to have it both ways. Janie's attorney's outsmarted the church's attorneys because this ancient constitutional language is faulty by proving that, by their definition of marriage, a same-gender marriage is impossible; so Janie cannot be accused of something that is impossible to do. Gays have been working for change, but people are afraid of change. Bringing the language up to date may open the church to the new possibility of full inclusion. They had to admit that Janie's attorneys were smarter than their attorneys. However, they demonstrated in their closed session writing the decision that the PCUSA can take away Janie's "excuse" for doing her ministry in Jesus' name: she can no longer claim to be following her "conscience" because they have "found" themselves right in binding her conscience to the rules of the church.

What upset me the most was that they allowed Janie to be a prophet while warning her of the risks of being a prophet, i.e., being brought before the church courts on charges again and again until she shuts up. What is ignored is 1) whose message the prophet brings and 2) to what end the message is proclaimed and 3) against whom is it proclaimed. God, justice and the PCUSA are shown to be incompatible. The oppressor silences or kills the prophet again while denying justice to LGBT children of God.

The problem with any of our "organized" churches, as I see it, is that constitutions allow for constituents to deny prophetic activity. The history of the treatment of the marginalized should begin with how Jesus treated them in the Gospels and the example of the early church in The Acts of the Apostles. Read Acts 10, 11 & 15. The Constitution of the early church was the Hebrew Bible. No Gentiles, period! Peter got the prophetic message that Cornelius and his household were not to be excluded from full inclusion in the fellowship of Christian believers because of their nationality. He proclaimed the message with positive results. Cornelius and the whole household were baptized. Peter was brought up on charges. The "constitutional" evidence was clear and unavoidable. Peter was guilty as charged. However, Peter testified that it was clear to him that at the baptisms in Cornelius' house, God gave those

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TLC Women's News



A few interested women got together (not everyone that was interested was able to make it) and set a calendar for the rest of 2008. All women 18 and over are invited to attend **TLC Women's Group** events, which will take place on the first Wednesday of even-numbered months. The first gathering will be 7pm Wednesday, June 4 at the church. It will be a game night and all are invited to bring a small snack to share, beverages will be provided. Apples to Apples, Blind Poker, and Scrabble will be available, and if you have a favorite game of your own, you are welcome to bring it with you! We'll talk about what else we want to do - in August, October, and December...

The next **Annual TLC Women's Retreat** is scheduled for November 21-23 at Bishop's Ranch, and in order to hold our spot, they need us to send our deposit as soon as possible. If you would like to attend, please reserve your space now by submitting your deposit of just \$41.00. Make your check payable to TLC with "Women's Retreat" in the memo line and turn it in to Karen Lehman as soon as possible! There is overnight space for just 21, so you are urged to reserve as early as possible! Your deposit may be mailed to Karen, put in her church mailbox, or handed directly to her. Questions? See, call, or email momvoice@comcast.net

The next **Lutheran Woman Today Bible Study** will be Monday, May 19 at 7:00 at church, and is the final meeting of this series.

Prime Real Estate!

How about those spiffy new "visitor" spaces in the TLC parking lot?
Please be sure and save those for first-time worshippers!
It's just another part of good hospitality at TLC!

Continued from previous page...

Gentiles the same gifts that had been given to all those Jewish believers in Jesus the Christ who had been gathered in the upper room when the Christian Church was brought into being with the Pentecost experience of God's Spirit filling each member. "Who was I, then, to try to stop God!"

It is no problem, however, for organized churches to stop God. Is it any wonder that so many with common sense look on this and similar church decrees and say, "To hell with organized religion!"? What a stumbling block to faith! Janie has got to keep ignoring these decisions from on high or the church will die. The life of the church is in prophets like The Reverend Doctor Jane Adams Spahr. Who else will teach the organized church to say, "God gave those QUEERS the same gifts that were given to all other believers in Jesus Christ!"

Paul Feiertag



**Memorial Day BBQ
and
60th Anniversary Celebration
at Mt. Cross Ministries Camp
Felton, CA
May 26, 2008
11am-4pm**

What is the Memorial Day BBQ at Mt. Cross?

- This day is hosted by the Mt. Cross Rangers
- Worship service celebrating 60 years of ministry at Mt. Cross
- Old-fashioned all-you-can-eat BBQ.
- Fellowship with other Lutherans from all over California
- Meet other people who are passionate about Mt. Cross Ministries.
- Entertainment & Music
- Great fun for the whole family, kid friendly!
- Silent auction and raffle.
- All proceed to benefit campership fund.



Adult Tickets-\$15.00 Youth (4 yrs to 9 yrs) Ticktes-\$6.00

Three and under are free.

7795 HWY 9 Felton, CA 95018

Memorial Day Weekend is sponsored by Thrivent Financial For Lutherans

Please contact Mt. Cross for more info:

831.336.5179 - Email: mtcross@mtcross.org - Website Link: www.mtcross.org

Awareness-Trial-Commitment:

What does this mean?

(Part 4: Bringing it all together-planning for Balance)

So far in this 4-part series, we've considered each "spoke" of the Awareness-Trial-Commitment "wheel" as it applies to TLC's *outreach* activities—the "big picture" things we do to reach out to those in the greater community who don't yet know about Thanksgiving Lutheran—and we have also looked at how each element applies "internally," to *everything* we do or plan at TLC. This month, we look at the importance of maintaining a **Balance** of Awareness, Trial, and Commitment activities in the congregation.

Hopefully, there is now some understanding of the three components of Awareness-Trial-Commitment planning: **Awareness** activities are activities and events that let people know about the mission and ministry of TLC; successful awareness-building actions lead to the desire/opportunity for people to "try out" Thanksgiving Lutheran. **Trial**-enhancing activities are the things we do to provide a warm and meaningful experience to those who have become aware of TLC and come to check us out. **Commitment** opportunities deepen, strengthen, and/or help newcomers live out their faith, and are spiritually enriching for existing members of the congregation as well. TLC's goal is to achieve a *balance* of activities in all three areas, and to add ministries and programs in an *intentional* way so that a balanced program is maintained. Why worry about balance? In a nutshell: Without "Awareness" actions happening, there will be few people to benefit from efforts to improve the "Trial" experience; without attention to the "Trial" experience of those who become aware of TLC, visitors will not return and few new people will commit to the congregation; if "Commitment" opportunities are lacking, successful efforts to build "Awareness" and enhance the "Trial" experience will be wasted!

Lack of balance is also a recipe for frustration and disappointment for those who plan and carry out activities: Without sufficient attention to Trial activities, those working to improve Awareness of TLC in the community will be frustrated when people who have been attracted come, have a disappointing experience, and never return. Those working to improve the Trial experience of newcomers may give up and decide that their efforts aren't really important or needed if no Awareness-building is happening to bring in people for them to serve, or if there are no enriching Commitment activities available to encourage those who have a good Trial experience to continue their involvement. Without attention to awareness-building and trial experiences, those planning and working to provide enriching Commitment opportunities can be disappointed by low turnouts for their events and feel their gifts are being wasted.

Adoption of the planning concept of Awareness-Trial-Commitment is primarily aimed at helping us think about how each activity or ministry we undertake might support our efforts to *reach out* to the community outside of our congregation and help them "plug in" to God's grace as celebrated at Thanksgiving Lutheran. Hopefully, you can also see how paying attention to all three of the elements of **Awareness-Trial-Commitment** (with a little help from **Communication!**) can provide a good basic framework for analyzing and planning every TLC activity!



Easy Fundraising YOU Can Do!

E Scrip

Use the ATM or credit card you've registered with EScrip and TLC receives a portion of your purchase.

Safeway (register your savings card) – up to 4%	Whole Foods – up to 4%	
Fircrest Market in Sebastopol – up to 3%	Petaluma Market – up to 3%	
Office Max – 2%	Round Table Pizza – up to 6%	
Baja Fresh – 5%	Carrows 3%	Coco's Bakery Restaurant 3%
SF Chronicle (new subscriptions and conversion to EZ Pay) 10%		
Pacific Dental Group 5%	Macy's 1%	Big O Tires 2%
Pep Boys 4%		

Plus many online shopping places like Land's End and Eddie Bauer. Get complete lists at EScrip.com – and if you have any questions, be sure and talk to Lisa!

Good Search.com

What if Thanksgiving Lutheran Church earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support TLC? Well, now we can!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting TLC.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Thanksgiving Lutheran Church as the charity you want to support. We're already registered, just type it in the space provided – you'll see it when you get there. **It's SO EASY!!!** You can make Good Search your homepage, or add it as a bookmark to your toolbar to help you remember to use it. So far we've raised just \$101.59 – imagine what will come our way for this year's efforts if we all get diligent about using GoodSearch on every first search query, and Good Shop.com when we want to shop online!

Opportunities Abound!!

Yes, that is true! There are oh so many things that you can do to as members of TLC to keep our church running smoothly!

Three of them are down right easy and two of them you don't have to do but once every two months! Can't get any better than that!

We always need volunteers to provide Communion Bread, there is a sign up sheet on the kiosk.

We always need people to help with the readings on Sunday mornings and other special dates. Call Mary Dawson 578 9542 to volunteer for this one.

And the flower chart on the cork board in hall across from the kitchen has blank dates on it that need to be filled.

Think about these three things, wanna help? Go for it!

Mary Dawson

Sunday Morning Education for Adults

Do you need to continue your education in your ever-dynamic relationship with the Divine?

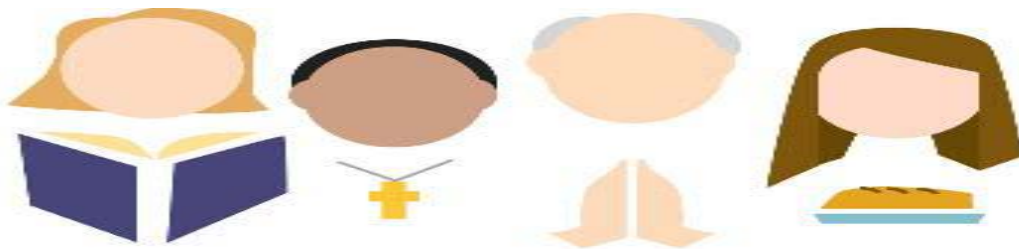
Wow! What a fantastic rhetorical question.

Since the start of Year One of our 3-year Lectionary, the participants of the Sunday morning adult education forum at TLC, which meets right after our fellowship time and during the youth education forums, has been working through the Gospel According to Matthew.

We've had some challenging conversations over Jesus' teachings and behavior. This forum has not been spiritual milk; it has been spiritual meat, sinew, protein, and fat, a great chew. I hope that it will digest as a blessing to those who have come, especially as we feast once again, during the few Sundays of Adult Forum left in May, upon the passion of the Christ and the post-resurrection appearances.

The Christian Education program at TLC will begin its summer hiatus on May 18. However, we have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft of the churchwide statement on human sexuality and to send our reactions to the churchwide office by the beginning of November. Therefore, I invite anyone, any age, to hold up Christian Education as a priority, even during the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, and to come after fellowship for this important discussion. Come and learn how to make your opinion known. Come participate in the history of the ELCA!

Pastor Jean



Liturgical Deacons Needed

One Body, Many Parts

Thank you to everyone who takes part in shaping the wonderful worship experience we get to have here at Thanksgiving! Reading the lessons, bringing the flowers, setting and cleaning up the communion, playing music, decorating the worship space, straightening up the chairs, planning the actual worship – these and other tasks all make worship complete. One of the elements this body is short on is Liturgical Deacons. An LD assists with worship – if there is a Psalm, the LD may read or sing the leader parts. The LD reads the prayers of the people, assists with communion, reads the post-communion prayer, and the dismissal. Sometimes the LD finds it necessary to help Pastor Jean straighten her stole!

A Liturgical Deacon can be any confirmed member of the church.

If you are interested, or are feeling called to assist with worship, please talk to Pastor Jean as soon as possible.

March and April Church Council Highlights...

- TLC had requested mortgage payments of \$3,100.00 each month for 2008. Having not heard from MIF at the time of our Congregational meeting last November, the congregation approved a budget for the year reflecting that amount. The Mission Investment Fund responded with an offer that reflects payments of \$3400.00 per month beginning in May 2008 (an increase of \$2400.00 for the year over our current budget), with an increase to payments of \$4400.00 per month for January of 2009 through October 1, 2009, at which time our current loan is set to mature. While these terms will represent a considerable challenge to the congregation, the Council agreed that it was necessary (and in our best interests in the long run) to accept the proposal. We can do this!
- The Council approved the establishment of the following three projects to be recipients of present and future Memorial Funds contributions: 1) Future patio on the church's north side, 2) Stained glass for the cross window in the sanctuary, 3) Future memorial garden on the property. This policy will provide donors with a choice of projects of benefit to the entire congregation while limiting the number of miscellaneous memorial designations and consolidating contributions into priority projects. Some monies currently in the general Memorial Fund had been previously designated for the stained glass project, and other current funds not previously designated will be designated for the patio. Individuals may designate contributions to any of these funds at any time they wish.
- The Council regretfully accepted the resignation of Kim Santiago from the Council due to her increasing work and family responsibilities—the Council has appreciated Kim's input and views on church matters and is thankful for her service!
- New TLC member Jean Flak has graciously agreed to step in to fill Kim's shoes for the remainder of Kim's Council term, which will expire December 31, 2008—thank you, Jean!
- Graffiti Watch: Council noted that graffiti was sprayed on the PG&E box, and we've been advised to watch for further graffiti and get it painted over right away, as this tends to discourage vandals. We are looking for volunteers to drive by the church regularly and report any new graffiti to the church office immediately.



Santa Rosa Junior College Orchestra to Perform Free Russian Music Concert!

Please mark Thursday, May 15th on your calendar as the date to enjoy an evening of music by Russian composers! The SRJC Orchestra will be performing a free concert at 7:30pm on campus at the Burbank Auditorium. TLC members Zoe Zuest-Becker and Fiona Becker (the youngest member of the orchestra!) perform with this group. Featured composers will include: Liadov, Borodin, Glinka, Tcherpinn (a stunningly beautiful piece), Shostakovich, and Tchaikovsky. Dancers from the SRJC Dance department will be performing to the music of Swan Lake. Hope to see you there!

Getting To Know... Ranee Sass

Almost a Santa Rosa native, Ranee was born in San Clemente, CA, but came here when only two years old. She went to Roseland and Shepard Schools, then graduated from Montgomery High School in 1994. To celebrate her graduation, Ranee and her family flew to Florida, then took a cruise ship to Jamaica, Can Cun and the Caribbean. She had a great time . . . except for three days when she was knocked out with sea-sickness. Her first and last cruise, says Ranee.

At Montgomery, she belonged to the Science Club and Art Club and also received a \$1,000 scholarship from the East Rotary Club. This grant, plus a Doyle Scholarship from Santa Rosa J.C. helped her earn an A.A. degree in Child Development.

Ranee has put her college courses to good use by working with children during the last 14 years. Her current position is at Little Schoolhouse where she is teaching three-year-olds. Previously, she was at Stepping Stones with two-year-old children.

Her child development experience is complemented by her own two children. Nathan was born in 1998 and is now in 4th grade. Katarene was born in 2002 and is attending kindergarten. Both children are at Riebli School. Ranee was married to Jason McPherson but has been divorced since 2004.

Most of her time and activities revolve around her children with lots of care-help from grandmother Colleen. She likes hiking and trips to the beach. She and the kids are often on bike trails . . . each on their own bikes. She also peddles at home on her stationary bike. She exercises each night to wind down from her busy day. Other interests are arts and crafts, and scrapbooking. Now with baseball season here she will be busy at Nathan's Giants games in the Mark West League.

At age 15, Ranee began coming to TLC with mom Colleen. TLC members at Airway gave her baby showers for both births and the children were baptized by Pastor Bob Willse. Nathan is now our newest acolyte.

Ranee's attendance fell off during TLC's unsettled years. Then she got acquainted with our interims and she loved both Flak and Jack and hoped they would stay a long time.

She is very happy with Pastor Jean and has become a regular again. She loves the way that Jean has gathered in the children. Nathan and Katarene love Pastor Jean and look forward to church on Sunday. (Could it be they also like having grandmother Colleen as their Sunday School teacher?) In fact, Ranee confesses that sometimes she favors skipping church on a Sunday, but the kids want to go and they pester her till she gives in!

George Land



The Nifty Fifties Group will meet on Thursday, May 28 at 12:00 noon at the home of Lorents and Jean Flak for a “Burger Bonanza”. Burgers, buns, and condiments will be provided and those attending are asked to bring whatever else they would like to go along with the burgers. Tours of the Flak garden will take place every 20 minutes. You won't want to miss out. Welcome!

May Meanderings of Pastor Jean

In the middle of May, my sister and I will make our annual trip to Yosemite to take in the blooming dogwood trees. This year, we are going in the middle of the week, so that I don't have to miss a Sunday at TLC!!!

I suspect that I have shared the following story with you AT LEAST once before, but it merits repeating.

When Janet and I decided to make this annual sabbath to revere and thank the Creator of Yosemite, we brought inspirational readings to share and bread and wine for Holy Communion. On Sunday morning, we set up our two-person sanctuary (2 camp chairs set where we could view Half Dome as our "stained glass window.")

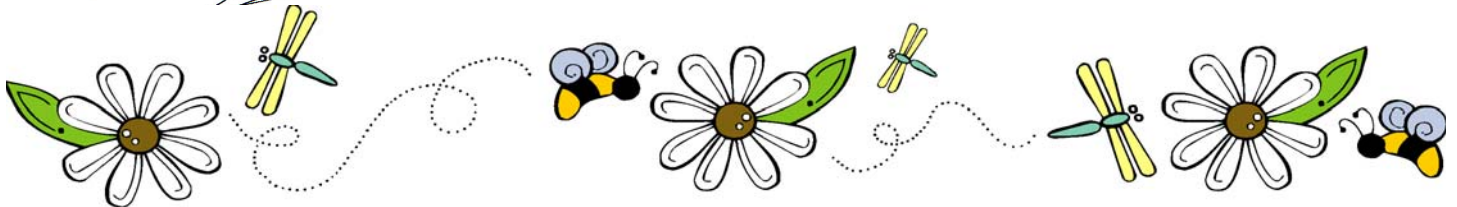
We started worship with a prayer of thanks. The prayer turned out to be the sermon and the Spirit's blessing.

We gave thanks to Creator for the beauty of Yosemite, then "thank you for John Muir and Galen Clark and Abraham Lincoln and for all the people who respond to the call to preserve nature." Then we became genuinely thankful for the concessions and the rangers and the road builders, and then for the construction workers who built the Ahwanhee Hotel, Yosemite Lodge, the stores, the restaurants, Curry Village. Then we gave thanks for the people who manufacture cement and trucks and tires and . . . well, we concluded, with thankful hearts, for everyone in the world. The people who do payroll for toilet paper companies – even they make it possible for Janet and I to worship in Yosemite Valley!

It is awesome to encounter awareness that we all make up Oneness. There is no insignificant opinion, vocation, belief, action.

I am thankful, TLC, that our motto is "Come As You Are." I'd like to add, "All Are Essential."

*Love,
Pastor Jean*

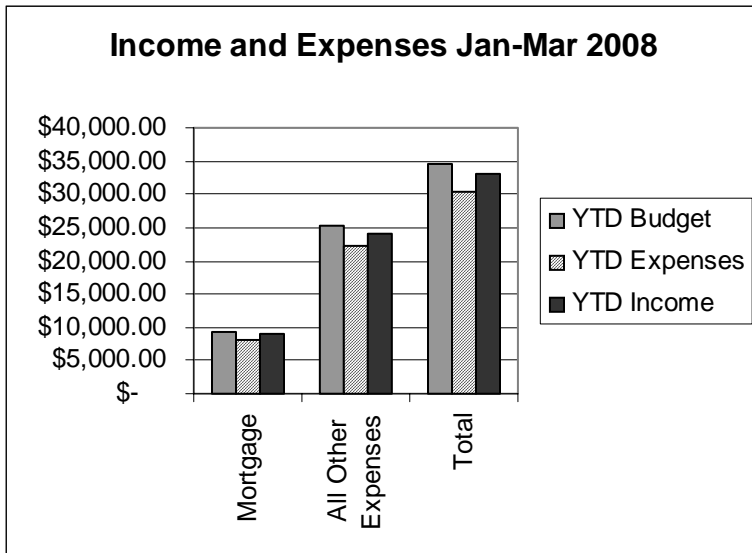


Donations needed for Mt. Cross Memorial Day BBQ Fundraiser!

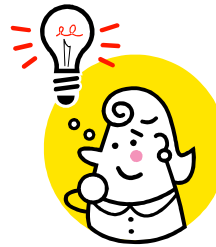
This Memorial Day weekend a group of eight youth and three brave adults will be traveling to Mt. Cross Camp in Felton to participate in their annual Memorial Day Work Weekend. We have applied for funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to help offset the cost of doing some repairs on the swimming pool. We invite you to join us for a weekend of work, fellowship and fun! If you are interested, you can download an application to attend at the Mt. Cross web site: www.mtcross.org. If you cannot attend, we encourage you to donate either a child's toy/game (ages 6-13) for the kids' raffle or a gift card worth \$20 or more for the adult "balloon raffle". These events are part of the 60th Annual Memorial Day BBQ fundraiser. This raises money for "camperships" for kids to attend summer camp at Mt. Cross.

A flyer about this event, and a sign-up sheet, are posted in the narthex.

If you'd like more information, please contact your Mt. Cross Rangers, Keith Becker and Zoe Zuest-Becker. Or you can talk to Fiona, Casey or Griffin Becker, or Natalie Koppen! Thank you.



*Note: 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 (see Council News article.)



Wondering what to do with that IRS Incentive check that might be coming your way? Why not consider a special “mortgage reduction” gift to TLC!

The On-Going Tug-of-War

When it comes to our stewardship of money we often find a battle going on within us. The Apostle Paul put it clearly: “I love to do God’s will so far as my new nature is concerned, but there is something else deep within me that is at war with my mind”. — Romans 7:22-23

Isn’t that the picture? Clear cut is the invitation to share generously out of the abundance God has given us, and deep down is our willingness to respond, even our joy when we do so.

But always there is this other voice in us, this darker side of us that wants to cling to what we have, and protect our other options for using our money. And our fear that there won’t be enough.

There was a man, visiting in Alaska, who came to an old native’s door. He noticed two virile looking sled dogs — one chained at each end of the front of the house. When the old gentleman opened the door, the visitor pointed this out and asked why, when it was so cold, they were not tied side by side. “Because they fight when they are close,” was the reply. “Well, which one wins?” asked the visitor. “The one I feed the most!”

When it comes to the inward battle in the stewardship of finances, the question is ‘Which one do we feed the most?’

There is plenty of ‘food’ thrown at us by the culture in which we live. Happiness is defined as Having. It is a ‘plate’ of food that is shoved in front of us day in and day out, from so many sources. We can’t live in our culture and avoid it. It is almost like being ‘force-fed’.

But we can counter it by making sure that we are availing ourselves of the ‘feast’ that God keeps serving up for us in God’s Word. Think of faithfulness in hearing the Word week in and week out in worship, exploring the rich banquet in study classes, and small groups, and exercising our ‘trust muscles’ by stepping up in our money investment in God’s mission as a regimen that God has promised to use to build up our faith and our joy in doing so.

We are not in this alone! “Who will free me?” Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord —Romans 7:25

Bud Egdahl, Stewardship sage of the Sierra Pacific Synod

2008 Synod Assembly Report: A New Bishop!

THE primary focus of this year's Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly was the election of a new bishop—a big deal, since bishops are only elected every 6 years! And what a process it is: On the first ballot, every voting member must “write in” the candidate of their choice (even previously “declared” nominees must have their name submitted at this point in order to be considered in future ballot rounds.) With each round of voting, the field narrows—after the third round of balloting, the field is narrowed to include candidates receiving at least 5% of the vote, and at this point the voting assembly has the opportunity to hear a brief statement from each remaining candidate; after the fourth ballot, voters, divided into 5 separate rooms assigned by synod district (TLC is in District A), had the opportunity to hear from each candidate individually, with some time for questions and answers—a grueling hour and a half for the candidates as they “made the rounds” between the 5 rooms! Hearing from all of the candidates, it seemed clear to me that we are blessed with some really talented and compassionate leaders in our church. By the 5th and 6th rounds of balloting, a candidate must receive a simple majority of the vote to be elected. Before each vote, the entire assembly observed a period of silence followed by prayer—it really was quite impressive to have a room full of nearly 600 people fall completely silent in prayer.

In the 6th round of balloting, **Mark Holmerud**, currently serving as pastor of Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis, CA was elected, receiving 328 of 490 votes cast. Those of us in attendance from TLC were encouraged to learn that Bishop-elect Holmerud's current congregation is also a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation (like we are!), and we welcomed his stated intention to encourage the Sierra Pacific Synod to “live into” its existing designation as an RIC synod, with a goal of making the “extraordinary ordinary.” Pastor Holmerud also indicated priorities in the areas of improved communication across our geographically large and diverse synod, leadership development, and evaluating and improving the existing synod structure and staffing situation.

While the primary focus was clearly the election for bishop, the assembly also voted for members to represent our synod at next year's church-wide assembly in Minneapolis, voted for members who will serve on the Synod Council, and adopted the 2009 budget (The budget reflected continuing reliance on Second-Mile Giving from congregations for funding for Mission Partners—organizations like Lutheran Social Services, Mount Cross, SF Night Ministry, etc. Watch the Trumpet for a future article on Second-Mile Giving!) In addition, Saturday's luncheon celebrated Bishop Mullen's past 6 years of service and honored retiring synod staffers Noreen Meginness and Lauren “Bud” Egdahl.

Thank you for sending me to the assembly—I appreciated the opportunity to serve as a voting member!

Sandy Koppen

P.S. Election results, resolutions acted on, and the Synod Mission Plan/Budget will be posted on the hallway bulletin board for those interested.

SO LATE GRACIOUS

by Paul Feiertag

Can you remember your first image of God? Can you remember if it was comforting or scary? How has your image of God changed as you grow older? My mother told me that her mother told her so many times that she was going to go to hell, that her foremost thought as a young girl was: I might as well die and get it over with. Her image of God had to change a lot for her to have an image of God as loving and gracious. She certainly was not going to inflict that spiritual pain on her children though.

I have always believed in God because from birth God has been part of every day's focus. Our parents prayed before and after every meal. Our mother sang hymns in the kitchen doing her work. Dad led our daily devotions after supper. Bedtime prayers were serious connections with God before falling asleep. I was praying the first time I conjured up an image of God. God was on a cloud, a white-haired and bearded man with a gown so long that it covered everything including feet. The action that demonstrated *interest in me and love for me* was that, when I whispered my prayer, God knelt down with hands at the edge of the cloud to hear me better. I credit my mother with emphasizing God's love to all four of her kids.

My Dad was my pastor. From my teens I began to have a narrow image of God with a lot of fences around representing everything I had to believe in order to be on God's good side. True believers only had access to God. They promised to believe all the articles of the creeds, all the attributes of God (all those omni-words), the sacred doctrines about the Bible—including inerrancy and verbal inspiration. Memorizing individual Bible verses pulled out of context that supported doctrines were more important than learning the historical settings and the literary context, i.e. e., what it meant to the original authors and readers.

After Ingrid and I went to a Catholic Marriage Encounter weekend where we received so much from priests and people who were not even Lutheran, I could not maintain that narrow image of God. My expanding image of God got me into a lot of trouble when I gave Communion to a member of the church and Christian-but-not-Lutheran-husband in her hospital room. "But," I said, "The body of Christ in that place consisted of the three of us. I could not cause a division in the body of Christ by denying him the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper."

From that discovery of an inclusive God there has been no stopping in God's image growing larger and more loving. God is present and active in every act of mercy, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, and salvation whether it is done by a Christian, Hindi, Muslim, Buddhist or humanist. I am a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. He best reveals God's image to me. I am Lutheran because of the unique emphasis of grace in its language about God and people.

TLC Community Garden Project

Progress! On Saturday, April 26th, while 800+ people were gathered in Oakland to elect a new Bishop for the Sierra Pacific Synod, workers in the TLC Community Garden were at the humble task of digging a trench. A worthy endeavor, to be sure! So the trench is dug, and now we must purchase the following glamorous items: 400 feet of 3/4 inch "Schedule 40" PVC and a 500 foot roll of "3/4 inch" black flexible drip tubing, a bag of 100 ground staples and 2 medium size cans of wet/dry PVC glue. When we have all that in our possession, we'll get a date with our irrigation guru, Shannon Leach of Gemini Landscaping and get the system set up and tied into our existing water box at the southeast corner of the garden. ***This will be a momentous step in the development of the garden, and your prayers of support are most appreciated!***

“GOD’S GIFT TO US IS ... HAPPINESS” ECCLESIASTES 3:13

The Martyr Attitude

People with a “martyr attitude” do things out of a sense of duty, not joy. They feel guilty about enjoying life. They tend to begrudge happiness to those around them. They resent it when others don’t do things for them, yet they won’t ask for help in case they create a sense of obligation. The fact is, “martyrs” don’t value themselves so they think nobody else does. That’s not how God wants you to live. The Bible says there’s a time to work...to play...to laugh, and enjoy life, because “God’s gift to us is...happiness.”

Jesus said, “I came to give life...in all its fullness”(Jn 10:10). You need fun and relaxation. They’re not unspiritual! Without them you become unbalanced and you open yourself to stress-related illness, mood swings and compulsive behaviors. You find yourself constantly vulnerable, driven and unable to relax.

Refuse to take on a false sense of responsibility. Don’t neglect or deny your own legitimate needs. Yes, you’re called to help others, but it’s not wrong to do things for yourself, to receive from God, and those He sends to bless you. If somebody compliments you, accept it graciously. If they attempt to belittle, ignore it and move on. One counselor writes: “When you find yourself trying to prove how much you’ve been hurt, or trying to ‘top’ someone else’s pain, stop and figure out what’s going on. The reward is learning to stop the pain and move into joy, peace and fulfillment”. David said, “In Your presence is fullness of joy” (Ps 16:11). So begin to spend more time with God. You only get to make the journey once, so enjoy it and make it count.

“Our happiness depends on the habit of mind we cultivate.

So practice happy thinking every day.” *Norman Vincent Peale*

The happiest people do not have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything.

From the K-Love radio devotional, submitted by Judy Sawyer



Labels and Stamps

For some of you this will serve as a reminder to continue saving your Campbell’s Soup labels and postage stamps. For those who may be unfamiliar with this, let me tell you what it is about...

In regard to the Campbell’s Soup labels, we want the UPC code and ‘Labels for Education’ portion. When removing the label from the can, try to leave this portion intact. Check the printout on the kiosk in the narthex for other labels they will accept. These go to Mosaic at Bethphage Village in Axtell, Nebraska, which is a home for people with various disabilities. (*Mosaic is an affiliated social ministry organization of the ELCA, a recognized service organization of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and a member of Lutheran Services in America. Ed.*)

For postage stamps, we are looking for unique ones or ones that are part of a special series. When cutting them off the envelope be sure to leave ¼” border all the way around. These are sent to International Partners in Mission.

There is a container on the shelf, as you come in the front door, for these items. I will see that they are sent to the appropriate place.

Gloria Feiertag

Top 10 Ways to Support Your Pastor

10. *Be generous in your compliments and judicious in your criticism. Take the time occasionally to put your gratitude in writing.*
9. *If you are unhappy about something, talk directly with the pastor; don't begin with a third party. If you can't go th the pastor directly, talk with someone on the Congregational Council. Remember to speak the truth in love. Keep confidences.*
8. *Express appreciation whenever you can and remember the milestones of your pastor's life (birthday, ordination anniversary or other significant days).*
7. *Remember that you only see a small percentage of the work involved in ministry.*
6. *Be present at the church for worship and other activities. Volunteer where you can and be a team player when you do. Keep in mind that ministry of the church is a mutual one that depends on both the pastor and the congregation.*
5. *Remember that the pastor's spouse and family are not employed by the church. They should not be expected to participate in activities except when they do so voluntarily.*
4. *Encourage and support your pastor to have an enriching life outside of the church. Build in plans for a weekly sabbath, yearly funded study leave and generous vacation and then observe your pastor's time off.*
3. *Remember that your pastor is ethically bound to maintain a professional relationship with you. Respect the boundaries that come with the ministerial office.*
2. *Financial support of your pastor should be commensurate with the standard of living of the congregation. Although they don't expect to get rich, Lutheran pastors do not take a vow of poverty.*
1. *Pray for your pastor.*

(Adapted from United Church of Christ - printed in the April '06 Trumpet, but bears repeating! ed.)

Pastor Jean Lebbert 707-327-6292

Church office: 707-544-0241

Worship:

**Sunday morning at 9:30 with Children's Sermon, Holy Communion, and education hour for all ages Thanksgiving Lutheran Church
1225 Fulton Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401**

email: tlcsantarosa@sbcglobal.net

On the web: www.thanksgivinglutheran.org

Next Trumpet Deadline!

The next TLC Trumpet deadline will be Wednesday, May 21. 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, May 18.