

## PASTOR'S PEN

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Dear Holy Trinity Family and Friends:

I have to be perfectly honest with you: I struggle to speak the Word of God in Children's Sermons. On Sunday, Feb. 25, I had a box full of the hymnals that I've used in my life, starting with the old *Service Book and Hymnal* and rolling through the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. I mentioned to the kids that in some places when the Church has changed hymnals there've been fights over it.

"You mean, like, wrestling, or, like, with weapons?" one of them asked. Thinking of one congregation I knew where members wore green or red buttons to announce their hymnal preference and the decision nearly broke the congregation in half, I had to admit, "Both."

Then, the Word was spoken. One girl yelled in exasperation. "What? In Church? It's supposed to be about God, not fighting!"

I could not have said it any better. I was tempted to end the worship service then and there. The Holy Spirit speaks through everyone, and on Sunday it spoke through one of our youngest members.

We've been blessed that in the introduction of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* there's been little to no conflict whatsoever. It warms my heart to see so many people working so tirelessly to make the implementation happen, and then see a congregation embrace the new book seamlessly on Ash Wednesday and the following weekend. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* was not an idol. Discarding it was relatively easy.

The slush storm of Feb. 13 and 14 kept the Weekday Spirituality class on Isaiah from discussing idolatry. This is a shame because Isaiah talks so much about it, and as disheartening as it can be to discuss it, we are tempted to practice it. Most of us are not tempted to follow Baal or Asherah or El or Bel or any gods of the ancient world other than the God of Abraham. The idols that tempt us take other forms. The one that is suggested so often that we almost don't think about it any more is still as strong as ever: money.

1 Timothy 6 tells us, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." It couldn't be truer in my life. If there is one thing about which I worry, it is money. I am always horrified that there will not be enough. It's not that I'm terrible at managing it; it's that I live in fear that I will exhaust it. It's fairly easy to say that a part of faith is placing one's life in God's hands. It gets a lot tougher to trust that God will provide enough for me to survive. I'd prefer to be the one in control. Money represents that control. Money is the closest thing in my life to an idol.

Lent is a time of self-denial and a renewal of our focus on God. For me, at least, that's the purpose of those Lenten offering envelopes and the collections we take at midweek Lenten worship. When I let go of the money in that envelope I let go of an idol. I turn away from a false god.

Money has a role in our society; that role does not encompass forgiving my Sin or redeeming me from death or giving me peace and wholeness. Those are the things that I need. Those are things that only God can give. Money tempts me into thinking that I'm the center of the universe and that instant, superficial happiness is what I deserve. I need that reminder, that Word of God, to keep me from chasing after idols. I don't think I've ever heard it so forcefully spoken as it was when cried out in last week's Children's Sermon, "It's supposed to be about God!"

In Christ,

The Reverend Timothy A. Leitzke  
Assistant Pastor

## ☞ COUNCIL CORNER ☞

The 2007 Church Council was installed on Sunday, Feb. 11, and the following people are now continuing to work to make Holy Trinity a Spirit-filled Church and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ:

Cindy Markus, Council President; Joy Blazak, Vice President and Chair of the Christian Education Committee; Dennis Blazak, Corporate Secretary and Co-chair of the Stewardship Committee; Ray Kaden, Co-Treasurer; Barbara DiCorcia, Co-Treasurer; Ken Olsen and Diana Anderson, Co-chairs of the Finance Committee; Evelyn Shibla, Co-chair of the Stewardship Committee; Lisa Beck and Grace Walton, Co-chairs of the Evangelism Committee; Joan Bowers and Diane Guarini, Co-chairs of the Social Ministry Committee; Rebecca Parker, Chair of the Worship and Music Committee; Buzz Goode and Henry Schwier, Co-chairs of the Property Committee; Kathryn Shinn, Youth Representative to the Council.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to speak with any council member. We have much work to do this year, as always, and need your help. So, look out for a very active council in 2007, volunteers who give their time and talents to serve the Lord.

Thank you for your continued support!

-- Cindy Markus

## ☞ EVANGELISM & STEWARDSHIP ☞

### Picture This!

Do you ever see people in church and wonder what their names are? Have you ever heard an announcement regarding a member and wished you could put a face with a name? Are you new to our church and do you wish you had something to help you put names with faces? Well, help is on the way!

We are producing a pictorial directory for our church. There is no cost to you or the church to have your photograph taken, and you will receive a complimentary 8-by-10-inch portrait and

directory for participating. You will be able to view your images electronically immediately after you are photographed. At that time, you will have the opportunity (but not the obligation) to purchase additional portraits to share with family and friends. Portrait sessions will run from March 13 through March 17. Sign up using the link on the Holy Trinity web site, [www.holytrinity-nj.org](http://www.holytrinity-nj.org) or in person following services. Call Dennis Blazak at (732) 892-9735 with questions about the directory project.

We look forward to "seeing you in pictures."

### Goodie, goodie!

The Evangelism Committee will be preparing to mail its famous goody care packages for college students in late March. We are asking all parents with college students to contribute, please, a jar of your child's favorite peanut butter and a box of crackers. Please leave these items in the church office, in a bag with your child's name on it. A list of the children's names and addresses will be posted on the Evangelism bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Please check to be sure we have the correct mailing address and add your child's info if he or she is not on the list.

If members of the congregation would like to contribute, we will accept donations through Saturday, March 17. (Ideas are listed below.) That gives us one week to inventory items and make a shopping list for any additional items we may need to "round out" the packages.

Suggestions:

- Home baked cookies and/or brownies (in baggies, ready to be placed in individual student's boxes)
- Canned fruit or snack size pudding
- Popcorn
- Raisins
- Hard candy, gum, LifeSavers
- Granola bars
- Juice boxes
- Pretzels, chips (individual packages)
- Cup of Soup
- Tuna fish
- Peanut butter
- Crackers

- Cookies

(No glass or personal items, please.)

If you prefer to make a cash donation and let us do the shopping, please put your donation in an envelope marked "Care Packages" and put the envelope in the offering plate or in the church office.

If you would like to bake goodies at home or have any questions, please call Pat and Chuck Augustine (732) 282-0813. Homemade items may be brought in on and left in the church kitchen on Saturday, March 24. They will be included in the packing on Sunday, March 25.

Thank you for supporting this very special outreach to our college students.

### LIBRARY

As a retired library educator in the area of library services for children, I am always excited when my UPS carrier delivers a box of new children's books to my door. I see about 10 percent of the approximately 5,000 books published for children and young adults each year in the United States. I pass on most of them to children and young adults in foster care in New Jersey, but some end up in our Sunday School library.

I rejoice that so many talented writers and illustrators are working in the children's book field today. The quality is generally quite high but every now and then a real gem arrives. Today was one of those times, when I received a copy of Grandfather's Dance by Patricia MacLachlan, the author of Sarah, Plain and Tall, winner of the Newbery Award, the highest honor given to a writer of children's books. In the Author's Note, Ms. MacLachlan informs us that Grandfather's Dance is the final book in her saga about the Whitting family. We will miss them.

The concluding story is framed around the preparation and celebration of the prairie wedding of Anna and Justin, but the heart of the story is family relationships and especially the relationship between Grandfather and his preschool grandson, Jack, and with his fourth-grade granddaughter, Cassie. There is both joy and sorrow (the book ends with the death

of Grandfather) in MacLachlan's "poetic celebration about the enduring spirit of family."

My hope is that this book will be made into a film as was Sarah, Plain and Tall. It is a wonderful read-aloud, not to be missed. You can find it in our Sunday School library.

~~ Ellin Greene



*Date to Remember:*

*Adopt-A-Book Coffee Hour, April 15*



All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome, by Kathy Hoopman, is a sweet and touching introduction to the very special world of children with Asperger Syndrome (AS). It allows us to begin to understand what goes on inside the unique mind of the child with AS. Of all the creatures in the animal kingdom the cat most nearly replicates the moods and individuality of such a child and provides a perfect medium to "tell the story of ... "

"... AS and how it makes a child exceptional. Like snowflakes, we are all different. Appreciating that allows us to enjoy and foster the individuality of the AS child."

This sensitive and insightful book helps us to enjoy the special attributes of the child with AS by relating the pictures of cats with their captions We learn to accept each child and love and care for them because " ... they are who they are."

Thank goodness for their difference.

~~ Joan and Ira Wallace

(The grandparents of a remarkable child with AS.)

### A BIBLE: PRICELESS

How many bibles do you have in your house? I think we must have seven or eight. My first one was a confirmation gift. We have acquired others through the years, and I confess, I take it for granted that I can read scripture whenever I want. Below, from the ELCA quarterly publication, is an article that reminds us that what we take for granted can be out-of-reach treasure to others.

"Imagine a land where the average income is only \$500 a year, books are a precious luxury, there are no libraries, and people stand in lines to enter a bookstore so they can merely look at a book...one they cannot afford to buy. How priceless then, is a book of the word of God ...in their native language!

"This was the land GayAnn Colliton and her husband found in Bolivia as they worked their medical missions over the years.

"We were always distressed to see the lack of any reading material for people," Colliton explains. "They are so thirsty for books in bookstores that lines start forming by 5 a.m., even though most stores don't open until 9 a.m."

"I mentioned to a member of Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) that I would be returning to Bolivia, and he asked me if I could take some Bibles with me," she continued. "I had never even thought of doing this. He immediately gave me ten Bibles written in Spanish. I was thrilled. I knew I was bringing something special to the wonderful people in Bolivia.

"Although there are a number of religious mission groups in the country, the Lutherans are the only group to bring Bibles.

"The Bolivians were very impressed that the Bibles were written in Castilian Spanish, their native language, instead of Mexican Spanish," Colliton tells us. "When I presented the Bibles to people, you would have thought I gave them a million dollars. They looked at the books like precious gold.

"One Bible, for example, went to a mother and her nine-year-old son. They live in a one-room thatch and concrete home with three other people. As a nurse, she only gets \$100 a year. To her, receiving the gift of a Bible was like winning the lottery. The young boy wanted to read it right there in the hotel. His mother just cried with joy.

"I cannot thank the Lutheran Men in Mission enough for these precious gifts. I have never done anything so self-satisfying," Colliton concluded.

"The people we know and have met in Bolivia are truly angels. They have nothing to give but their hearts and they

freely hand them over. We will never know what having a Bible means to them, but from their smiles and tears, I will remember not to take the reading of my Bible for granted."

"Although Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in the world, second only to Haiti, they are celebrating the richness of God's love. Through the support of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission, GayAnn is giving the priceless gift of the Bible to the people of Bolivia. And GayAnn and her husband received something almost as priceless from Bolivia, their adopted daughter, Ana."

-- Carla Conaty, *Mission Interpretation*

### Hymnals in Motion

The old *Lutheran Books of Worship* are resting on the stage in Fellowship Hall. They lie there through the first weekend in March for those who are interested in retrieving copies that they donated when the *LBW* was introduced. After Sunday March 4 the books will be available to anyone who wants them. Those that remain will be donated to the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg's A.R. Wentz Library.

Meanwhile the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* pew editions are in place and made their debut on Ash Wednesday. Making this happen took a tremendous amount of work. Many thanks go to Becci Parker, Cindy Markus, Joy Blazak, Dennis Blazak, & Spencer Blazak for getting the books ready for the pews. Ryan Shinn, Kris Librizzi, Andrew Flores, Spencer Blazak (again), Tim Vogel, Eric Stansfield, Jacob Moore & Kyle Suchecki helped with the transfer of green books out of the sanctuary and new cranberry books into the sanctuary. Gretchen Cook and Karen Hill Miske deserve a round of applause for helping us learn the new liturgies. There are others who certainly are overlooked and yet deserve recognition.

The worship bulletins now contain the "orders of service" for both the 8:45 & 11:15 Holy Communion services. They're like tables of contents, letting us know what page we're on, in case we forget (with ten communion liturgies and over 800 hymns,

losing one's place is easy!) This will take some adapting on our part as we get accustomed to the new books. This new layout required some serious revamping work by our Office Manager, Diane Churchman, who worked relentlessly to get the bulletin formatted and ready for the weekend.

In short, this has been a lot of work, but now we have our Sunday worship contained in one resource and our Saturday hymns in one place. That, and we sound pretty good singing *ELW Setting Nine!*

### ☞ W.E.L.C.A. ☞

The Elisabeth Circle will meet at 9:30 a.m. March 12 in the church.

At our next meeting we plan to do a coffee hour. The hostess will be Eleanor Gaiser. Devotions will be by Marjorie Delaney. We welcome with joy all newcomers. Please contact Louise Moenke (732) 899-6846, if you have any questions about the Elisabeth Circle.

Louise Circle will meet at 7 p.m. March 12. The hostess will be Pat Walton. Devotions will be by Susan Zitzner.

We will meet at 9 a.m. March 24 to prepare Easter baskets for the home bound. We welcome with joy all newcomers. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Smarr (732) 681-3369 or Kathy Nicholas (732) 988-5355.

### Peace to You!

A few moments of peace and quiet a week is all some women ask for. We are offering one and one-half hours a week.

Join Sister Gerri Contento and your faith family sisters to practice T'ai Chi Chih, a meditation that employs slow movements.

(If you went on retreat this fall you will remember Sister Gerri led T'ai Chi Chih there, too!)

Classes will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 17 and 24, May 1 and 15, and Monday, May 21 in St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Point Pleasant. The cost is \$45.

Sign up sheets will be available in the Holy Trinity church office during the week of March 5. First come, first served.

### ☞ CHILDREN OF GOD ☞

Holy Trinity welcomed Ella Flynn Morbee into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on Saturday, Feb. 17. Ella is the daughter of Richard and Megan Morbee. She was born on Nov. 1, 2006 in Brick, New Jersey. Her sponsors were Ryan Flynn and Tracy Shellard.

### ☞ REST IN PEACE ☞

A memorial service occurred here on Wednesday, Feb. 21 for Rudolf Buser, husband of Waltraut, a long-time member of our adult choir. Please keep the Buser family in your prayers.

Holy Trinity member Oscar Olsen entered eternal life on Feb. 26 and was buried on March 2. Our faith family's love and prayers are with Oscar's wife, Phyllis.

### ☞ MAIL BAG ☞

Dear Church family and friends:

Thank you for the beautiful sympathy cards sent to me for the loss of my sister, Hertha Maggs. They were very comforting and deeply appreciated.

~~In Christian Love  
Emma Olsen and family  
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The Manasquan Food Pantry wants to thank all the children for bringing food to your church throughout the year. There are needy families in our area who really appreciate your generosity. Thanks, also, for the 10 turkeys.

~~ The Manasquan Food Pantry



Dear Church Council and Members of Holy Trinity,

Thank you for sending Pastor Mary and me to Corpus Christi to attend the Stephen's Ministry Leadership Conference. After a week of intense focus on all aspects of this Christ-caring ministry, we came away with renewed energy and more insight as to what we, here in Holy Trinity, need to do to make the program work for us.

One of the things we learned (a very important one) is that it is Christ who does the curing. He heals the broken hearts and

bodies. It is He who mends broken relationships. Our focus is to be one of caring for each other and bringing Christ to them in their time of need.

In spite of the hectic schedule, Pastor Mary and I managed to share much laughter and joy this past week together. One of the joys for me was our sharing at morning devotions. Yes, and even in devotions we managed to “laugh for joy” as we read various Bible passages that appeared to be speaking to us and our mission in this church. We are much blessed to have her as our spiritual leader! I trust that the knowledge we received at the conference will help to empower all of the Stephen Ministers in our congregation to share the love of Christ within our church and in our communities.

There is a Bible verse on which I reflect each morning, along with my usual devotional material. It helps to lend more focus to my day and reminds me who I am, a child of God. This is my hope for our church as a whole and a personal desire.

“What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

~~ Yours in Christ, whose name we share and serve, Nancy Sabo

