

Take the *Journey*

Share the *Experience*

Always Being Made New:
Sharing Our Faith

2013 Lenten Devotional

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Our theme this year at Our Savior's Lutheran church follows the 25th Anniversary theme of the ELCA: "Always being made new". We remember that God is always working, in ways we cannot always imagine, to bring life and renewal to the whole world. Each of the following 40 reflections are statements of faith and are about our journeys of faith. They are offered by YOU! Enjoy.

Ash Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Pastor Joe Johnson

Hebrews 12:1-2a

"So then, since we are surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of the obstacles and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race that lies before us. We do this by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

We are surrounded by this "great cloud of witnesses"... these people who are Our Savior's Lutheran Church! So then, let us run with perseverance this race that lies before us. This race, is a journey... a journey along a path that God has set... a journey with obstacles in which we become entangled. But what makes this journey worth running, is that we journey together.

Today, Ash Wednesday, is the first day of Lent. As we journey together through this season... we are reminded that Lent is a time of prayer, repentance, reflection, self-examination, discernment, and discipline. As part of our Lenten prayer journey, we share our stories of obstacles, triumphs, questions, and challenges that have shaped who we are and what we believe. We share these stories, our own stories, written by the hand of God on our hearts and in our lives.

For the next 40 days, we journey through this season with devotionals written by Our Savior's Lutheran Church... stories of how God has been at work in our lives, what God is up to right now, and discerning what God is calling us into in the future. By hearing other people's stories of faith, we better understand our own story.

Thank you to everyone who wrote a devotional! May we journey together through Lent keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author of our story, the perfecter of our faith!

Blessings, Pastor Joe

Thursday, February 14, 2013
Pastor Siri Strommen Campbell
Luke 10:41-42

“But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.’”

This has been one of my favorite stories for two reasons; Martha is frantic doing all the womanly work of preparing food. Mary, on the other hand, is sitting at Jesus’ feet listening to him teach. “Sitting at the feet” of a rabbi was only what disciples did. And only men could be disciples. Mary wasn’t just ignoring her womanly chores but was stepping over cultural norms to do what only men could do.

Yet, Jesus doesn’t scold her. He doesn’t insist Mary fulfill her duties. He knows that her hunger to learn about God is more important than anything else. As a woman who wanted to be a pastor, which some people still feel is only a position reserved for men, I have found grace in this story. Jesus is far more understanding than the culture is.

But secondly, Jesus is not scolding Martha for this woman’s work. Her work is necessary. Rather, it is her inner chaos that concerns Jesus. Jesus wants to give us what we need - peace in our hearts. He will not deny Mary’s search for this wisdom and peace. He also points out to Martha that she is not even aware how frantic she is. Jesus is an insightful teacher.

This Lent, we are called to do two things: first, to notice the chaos within ourselves and be honest about it. Second, to search for that which gives true peace and meaning to our lives - God.

So many Lenten disciplines invite us to simplicity, to letting go. It isn’t to punish us, but rather because we sometimes need to be forced to look at our lives. By fasting some learn to appreciate the nourishment of God and food. By giving up sugar or pop, others see how much of a crutch it has become. By adding daily devotions or daily meditation walks, others discover that their soul craves the consistency of time “at the feet” of Jesus.

Pastor Siri is the Education pastor at Our Saviors. She has two children, Theodore and Lucy. While she does not enjoy cooking, she loves eating and likes sushi, Indian, and many ethnic foods.

Friday, February 15, 2013

Charlotte Engel

“It’s in the Valleys I Grow” by Jane Eggeston

My daughter Stacy and I read this poem every day. It’s so meaningful to us. Stacy influences me every day with her happiness and strong faith. She never complains even about how sick she gets. She is a wonderful person.

It’s in the Valleys I Grow

Sometimes life seems hard to bear, full of sorrow, trouble and woe

It’s then I have to remember that it’s in the valleys I grow.

If I always stayed on the mountain top and never experienced pain,

I would never appreciate God’s love and would be living in vain.

I have so much to learn and my growth is very slow,

Sometimes I need the mountain tops, but it’s in the valleys I grow.

I do not always understand why things happen as they do,

But I am very sure of one thing, my Lord will see me through.

My little valleys are nothing when I picture Christ on the cross

He went through the valley of death; His victory was Satan’s loss.

Forgive me Lord, for complaining when I’m feeling so very low.

Just give me a gentle reminder that it’s in the valleys I grow.

Continue to strengthen me, Lord and use my life each day

To share your love with others and help them find their way.

Thank you for the valleys, Lord for this one thing I know

The mountain tops are glorious but it’s in the valleys I grow!

Charlotte Engel was born and raised in Milan, Minnesota. After high school she worked in Appleton, Minnesota. Then she and her sister went to Fargo, ND and worked. That is where she met Rolph and got married. They have lived on their farm for 52 years. They have three children: Jim, Cherly, and Stacy. They also have two grandchildren- Danielle and Nicholas.

Saturday, February 16, 2013

Terry Lee

John 13:34-35

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

I was raised by living disciples of Jesus. How can that be, you say? While I was growing up, one of my aunts provided countless devotionals. Another of my other aunts let me “help” set up for Sunday school every Sunday before I was the “right age to attend.” My first Sunday school teacher was remarkably kind, not just to me, but to every child in our community. My first Sunday school music leader taught us song after song of Jesus’ love. Many other Sunday School teachers took the time to encourage me to think, write, ask questions, and express what God’s love meant for me.

My pastor always asked how I was doing and challenged me to think about what I believed and why I believed it. He cheered on all of the youth and welcomed any teen into our classes and activities.

The entire staff at Red Willow Bible Camp provided a place where talking about faith and thinking about faith was accepted and celebrated! As a staff member I experienced complete acceptance and the awesome faith of others which was exemplified by serving our campers, our leaders, and each other.

Various community members (not just church family) encouraged me, prayed for me and modeled in countless ways how to care for others, serve others, and accept others.

Certain school teachers challenged me to learn - not just academics but morals and character traits that they modeled day after day. They took a personal interest in me

Was I influenced by Lutheran theology? Yes. Was I influenced by Christianity? Absolutely. Was I really raised by disciples of Jesus? I believe I was. Don’t ever underestimate how your acts of kindness, your words of encouragement or your example might deeply affect another... after all, aren’t we all living disciples of Jesus?

Terry Lee was born in California, but grew up in the small town of Northwood, ND. She was baptized and raised in the Lutheran church and confirmed at Northwood Evangelical Church where she and Tim were also married. She works part time in the elementary school library and cares for her grandchildren. She and Tim have two daughters and three grandchildren. They also have their big dog, Theodore.

Sunday, February 17, 2013

Luke 4:1-13

The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."'

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."'

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.



Monday, February 18, 2013

Bishop Bill Rindy, Eastern North Dakota Synod, ELCA

Luke 4:13

“When the devil had finished every test, he departed from [Jesus] until an opportune time.”

Temptations will come this 40 day Lenten journey. Often the obvious ones are easiest to resist, because we can see them coming. Even when you're really angry with your neighbor, you're not going to *kill* them. But to speak ill of that neighbor, to paint his or her actions in the least charitable light comes easily, when in reality, it can be equally deadly to his or her reputation and certainly to your relationship. It's often the subtle, “small” ones which can be so destructive. They keep us from God's will for our lives.

Addictions can come in such small packages, yet they too, can be equally deadly as they rob us of God's richest plans. We're inclined to trade brief, momentary pleasures, for those things which lead us deeper into relationship with God and one another. Drugs, alcohol, sex, food, work, and hobbies when in their proper places are a gift from God. When out of place they can kill: time, talents, relationships, lives.

Jesus was tempted in EVERY way. Will the world miss one rock if it gets turned into a loaf of bread? What's wrong with a little misplaced worship? Can't God handle a little testing? It really is about the first commandment: I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me. Period. Yet the reformer John Calvin reminds us that the human mind is an idol factory. We have the capacity to make anything, anyone, into the misplaced object of our worship, that which we place first in our lives.

I've got good news and bad news for you: You will fail at some opportune time during Lent. But this holds equally true:

“So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Romans 7:21-25

On the Journey with you,

Pr. Bill Rindy

Bishop, EaND Synod, ELCA

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

McKenzy Diehl

If we pray, we will believe; If we believe, we will love; If we love, we will serve. —Mother Teresa

When I was 14, I experienced an amazing thing. I was lying in bed one night and I got a really bad headache. I then sat up and said, "I'm going to be a pastor." The following moments of my life were all about questions. What was this moment? How do I trust that it's God? Do I really believe what's going on with me?

The questions kept coming as I lived my life knowing that I was going to be a pastor someday. I kept striving to know what was going on with me and what God was up to. I persisted in trying to understand; knowing that I might not ever completely understand what happened that night and I went on with my life living with trust in Christ and that God had a plan for me.

A little over a year later, things got rough. Things happened that I never thought would happen to me and it changed my life more than I could ever completely understand. School then became a place where it was painful for me to be. I was waiting for God to come down and say, "McKenzy, YOU are MY child. I am here." But I never got that message. I felt alone and unprotected from the horrors of the world. Why me? What kind of things did I do to deserve this? I will also never know those answers.

I was the one who had to make the change.

I then switched schools to Oak Grove Lutheran in Fargo. It was the best change I had ever made. I was no longer hiding behind a mask or walking around with shame. I then understood that I would forever be different and it was God's plan to make the light in the darkness.

I learned how to be authentic, real, honest, a friend, and how to trust when I never thought I would trust again. I've learned more about myself that I ever would've imagined. I've found what it really means to have a friend, to trust someone, and to have faith that everything will be okay.

So what does this have to do with my faith? This short story of me has shaped me into what I am today. I have grown. I have succeeded. I have persisted. I have trusted. I have the faith that what goes wrong today has a light that can be shown tomorrow. I have the faith that there is a God, and God is the only way to get through the tough and horrible situations in life.

What I say to you, my friends, is ask the tough questions, have a curious faith, **make the change, let the world know why you're here, and live what Mother Teresa said; "If we pray, we will believe; If we believe, we will love; If we love, we will serve."** Believe; because there is only one Light you will find in the dark and trust that it is the Lord.

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Jill Hebl

Philippians 4:5-9

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Since I was a little kid, I knew that Jesus lived in my heart. That is how my parents **explained it, and it always just made sense to me. Consequently, I don't have a story of a life-altering event which led me to Him.**

My path has been more of a gradual process of Christ pulling me back to Him when I strayed off course - yes, I have strayed off course. At those times, I had the option of turning to Him or turning my back on Him. Luckily, through faith, and the support of awesome family and friends, I have never turned away. Christ has never failed me, and has always picked me up and put me back on course.

So, since I don't have a story of the moment I accepted Christ, my devotional is about a *guardian angel* who came into my life:

When I was very young, I had my daughter. Like most college students, I didn't have much money. Shortly after Halli was born, I received an envelope addressed to me, no return address. Enclosed in the envelope was a piece of white paper, explaining in type-written font, that I would receive six envelopes, one each month, which would contain \$100 to be used for anything I needed. Folded in that piece of paper was a \$100 bill.

For each of the following four months, I received an envelope addressed to me, no return address, with a \$100 bill folded in a blank piece of paper. I tried for the life of me to figure out who this *guardian angel* could be who was sending me the much needed money. The envelopes showed that some were processed through the Fargo post office, while others came through Grand Forks (tricky angel).

When my sixth letter came, it contained a type-written letter wrapped around the \$100 bill. The letter said:

Dear Jill,

As the end of 6 months comes to a close, I want to encourage you in your walk with the Lord. The older you get, the more you will realize that Christ is everything. Please do not get anxious about anything, remember Philippians 4:5-9. Jill, it has been my privilege to help you along on your journey here. You see, God does care for his children! GOD BLESS.

In conclusion, I would like to pass on what my guardian angel taught me: read and remember Philippians 4:5-9; and may the God of peace be with you.

Jill and her husband, Bob, live in Hillsboro with their two children, Halli and Cole.

Thursday, February 21, 2013

Jason Lovas

Psalm 46:10, Luke 3:16, John 14:1-3

Where do I start? How can I pick just one bible verse when I have so many favorites?

A favorite Psalm of mine is Psalm 46:10

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."*

I find that truth is not discovered in noise and commotion; but rather is found in the quiet and still of the moment. Thus, my servitude to the Lord is still and quiet. I wish not to boast, nor seek any praise. For it tells us in Luke 3:16,

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

If John was not worthy of untying His sandal, than surely I am unworthy of His love and of His forgiveness. No service of mine can make me deserving of God's love, thus I will quietly praise and serve the Lord. I am forever in His indebtedness, for my best service will forever fall short of the glory of His kingdom.

Although our works here can never fulfill our shortcomings, we shall not lie idle because of feelings of hopelessness and of being overwhelmed. Rather just the opposite is true; God has called each of us to fulfill our roles in this life, so that we may be with Him in glory forever and ever. John 14: 1-3,

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Jason is a lifelong member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. He has been the treasurer since 2006 and is a member of the Church Council.

Friday, February 22, 2013

Pastor Joe Johnson

Psalm 34:11

Follow Me My Friend

“Follow me my friend and listen to me and I will teach you to honor the Lord”

My friendship with J.D. started when I was a freshman in high school and he was a senior. He was one of the stars of the football team and well liked. He invited me to attend a youth retreat with his church. The next weekend we were off on an adventure to Winnipeg!

We became friends, and J.D. became one of my Christian mentors. We attended the same college (again, I was a freshman and he was a senior). He was leading a Spring Break Mission Trip to Florida to build a house with Habitat for Humanity. I signed up for the trip and this became for first experience with missions work!



When we were in Florida, after working on the house, we went to the beach. As we walked out onto the pier J.D. said, “Joe, follow me”. He climbed up onto the pier railing and I followed. J.D. said, “one... two...” I started thinking, “He’s really going to dive into the water...” “Three”.

I took the leap of faith and dove into the water. Apparently, as we took the leap, one of our friends snapped a picture just as we were diving off the pier (see photo).

Since that trip, I have led dozens of missions trips, numerous high adventure youth ministry trips, and helped build four houses with Habitat for Humanity. The influence of this one friend, changed the course of my life!

I will always be thankful for J.D. for inviting me, getting me involved, encouraging me in my faith, and teaching me that faith is an adventure!

J.D. continues to be one of my best friends. He is a medical doctor at Bethany Center, a faith based clinic that works with local outreach ministries. He and his family live in Greenwood, SC. Check it out at “Dr. JD at the Bethany Center” on Facebook.

Years after that first missions trip, I gave J.D. a copy of this picture with the words, “Follow me my friend and listen to me and I will teach you to honor the Lord”.

Saturday, February 23, 2013

Phyllis Leraas

“Because He Lives” by Bill & Gloria Gaither

*God sent his son
They called him Jesus
He came to love
Heal and forgive
He lived and died
To buy my pardon
An empty grave
Is there to prove
My Savior lives*

*(Chorus)
Because he lives
I can face tomorrow
Because he lives
All fear is gone
Because I know
He holds the future
And life and is worth the living
Just because he lives*

It was February 27th, 1992. I was a stay at home mom with a 7- and 4-year-old both asleep for the night. I was busy gathering the supplies my mother and I would need for our craft day planned for the next day. Then came the call from my dad. Mom was being taken by ambulance to Fargo. It didn't look good. He said he would call again when they got there. Time went by so slowly as I waited for the next call to come. When it finally came, the news was unbelievable. Not only was Mom gone, but the ambulance driver had also suffered a massive heart attack while in route to the hospital and was dead. Our small town was in shock. None of it made sense. It sounded like something from a movie. How could life change so quickly. One minute I'm anticipating a fun mother and daughter day, the next I'm faced with the loss of my best friend, my mother. I still had many things I wanted her to teach me; for her to give me advice that only a mom can give.

As my family planned the funeral, We chose this song, “Because He Lives” to be sung at the service. My mom always lived her life ready to meet her Lord at any time. She passed that faith onto me. As difficult and dark as that time was, I never doubted where my mother was and that we will indeed be together again one day. I knew I could face tomorrow.

I still miss her and think of her often. I have been blessed to be able to sing at many funerals over the years and each time I am asked to sing this song, it reaffirms my faith in the life to come and it makes me feel Mom's presence with me. Yes, life is worth the living just because He lives!

Phyllis and her husband Gary have been members of Our Saviors Lutheran Church for 24 years. They have a daughter, Kari (Mike Tweten) who lives in Grand Forks and a son, Andy (Teal) who lives in Minot. They have two grandchildren. She works as Resident Care Coordinator at Sanford Hillsboro Care Center. She is a member of the Worship Team, sings in the church choir, and leads Our Savior's Light (band).

Sunday, February 24, 2013
Luke 13:31-35

The Lament over Jerusalem

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."'



Monday, February 25, 2013

Elli Lemm

Psalm 55:22

“Cast your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.”

This verse, from Psalm 55, really sticks out to me because those that turn to **GOD in prayer can trust in the Lord’s faithfulness. Every time I read this verse** all of my troubles and worries seem to fly out the window, and I am reassured of the **Lord’s endless love and guidance.**

I have gone to church all of my life. As a young child it was not always easy getting up on Sunday mornings, but when I asked the question, “Mom, do we have to go to church?” I always received this response, “No, you do not have to go to church, you get to.” As I got older I started to really enjoy going to church and when I started confirmation in the seventh grade I began to develop a clear idea of what my faith and attending church meant to me. My small group leaders helped me to grow not only in faith but also as an individual.

Two of my favorite ways to express my faith is by singing and praying. I love to sing with my family and music is a big part of my life. Praying gives me time to clear my mind and connect with God and sometimes being a teen in this day and age can be difficult. By casting my burdens onto the Lord I find peace and reassurance in myself.

Elli Lemm is a senior at Hillsboro High School where she runs cross country, track, and takes wrestling stats. She is involved in band and choir, and is the Parliamentarian for Future Business Leaders of America. She currently serves on the Northern Lights Advisory Board for Students Against Destructive Decisions and enjoys showing cattle, playing the violin, singing, writing, and running. She plans to attend North Dakota State University next fall.

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

Keith Meyer

I've been playing in church bands of one type or another off and on for 30 years. I've never been so fulfilled playing music as when I play in a church band for a congregation of believers and for our Lord.

My first experience with playing in a Christian band was when I was in college at Mayville State. I had made many Christian friends at an organization called Summer Singers which was a group of 40 or so college age kids that got together once a week in the summer to play volleyball and sing for the Lord. Some of my friends in Summer Singers had a band called Carpenter's Tools that travelled most of the summer to various churches around North Dakota and Minnesota giving witness through music.

Carpenter's Tools had band members from Mayville, Portland, Marion, Clifford, and Warwick. This was back in the day when Mayville-Portland was still separate from Clifford-Galesburg and May-Port and Hillsboro couldn't stand each other. The rivalries were thick between those high schools. When Carpenter's Tools came to me and asked me to play bass guitar with them I was stunned, but also honored that they thought highly enough of one of those Burros to let him join their Christian band.

The power of God spoke to me and through me during my time with Carpenter's Tools. The power spoke to me to set aside old rivalries and become fast friends with my fellow band members, bonded together by Christ's love. There was no better example of this than how Lowell Nelson and I became brothers in the faith. Just a few short years earlier Lowell and I were blood enemies because he wore Patriot red, white, and blue and I wore Burro blue and white. But God told me it was time to set aside childish things and heed His call to witness on his behalf.

Witness we did. Lowell and I developed the reputations as being the pastors of the band because once he or I got going with witnessing in between songs there was no stopping us. We simply talked about how various Bible verses related to us and our lives and how that could relate to the members of the congregation we were visiting. This was God's way of strengthening me and using my talents to help strengthen others.

I thank God for my time with Carpenter's Tools. It was a very special time in my life. I gained so much richness by sharing God's love with others.

Keith is currently the President of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. He and his wife Betty have three children.

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Jon Strommen Campbell

“Now and Then”

I have a distinct memory as a child sitting in church and feeling completely BORED by the music. I looked at the page of the old hymnal and wondered to myself, what kind of people had to sit around and put all this together? What are these names and numbers at the bottom of every hymn? Only a nerd would know that!

Years later, I finished my Master of Sacred Music degree, and became one of those nerds. And the hymns from my childhood now sustain me in adulthood. Let's be clear though: some of the music WAS boring, and poorly led.

However, other hymns became a part of my spiritual DNA, like “All Creatures of Our God and King” and “Holy, Holy, Holy.” I cannot sing them without being transported back to Salem, OR, to a degree, singing with my parents and grandparents.

One of the lessons I've learned about our worship life is that it is for a lifetime, it is for the “now”, but also for the “then.” Worship isn't just about a present moment experience, but a building experience, a learning experience, which helps form and pass on our faith. So if you ever find your mind wandering in church, if you ever feel “bored” by a hymn (or a sermon!!), first of all, know it's “okay.” It happens. But also remember that what you hear, see, taste, say, and sing in worship may sustain you for a lifetime, but may also sustain your children in the “then” you can't even imagine.

Jon (Pastor Siri's husband) graduated from Luther College in Decorah, IA with a music degree. In 2002 he graduated from Luther Seminary with a Masters of Sacred Music. He has had various positions as a church music director. He now attends NDSU as a doctoral student in choral conducting.

Thursday, February 28, 2013

David Gordon

Mark 16:16

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

This verse has had great significance throughout my life. It is simple yet directive. Yes, I have been baptized and yes, I believe; that is all that matters. **I was a young teen during the late 1960's when generations were torn apart. I saw hypocrisy in the way we all lived and rejected the church, but still embraced my faith, holding Mark 16:16 close. “I was baptized and believed that Jesus Christ walked the face of this earth and conquered death,” I was saved. This all made logical sense but rejecting the church also meant rejecting forgiveness.**

My family grew up attending church but I fought back. It wasn't until I declared my love in marriage that the power of church and congregation struck me. Asking God to bless our marriage in front of family and friends till death do us part was a high order. This was my first public commitment to God and established not only a belief, but a drive to live in faith. That does not happen overnight.

Upon the news that we would be new parents, I realized the need to rid myself of the guilt of sin and allow myself to live clean. At age 31 it was time for my first communion. I was a believer but never felt worthy of the sacrament. I finally submitted to the power of God. As I walked back from receiving the bread and wine I saw my Uncle sitting in his usual pew and he was crying. He knew more about what was going on than I did.

I can't say that practicing faith has been easier since that day but knowing that my sins are forgiven gives me strength to be a member of the congregation of people who have been baptized and strive to believe. Thanks be to the Church of God for it is a place we can all go to belong and be forgiven.

David and his wife Amy have two children.

Friday, March 1, 2013

Shayla Fossum

Psalm 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation- whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - f whom shall I be afraid?

This verse is very powerful to me because it gives me full knowledge that I have nothing to ever fear or become afraid of. The Lord God will overpower any danger or fear I ever come across. He is the center structure of my life and I can always count on him to be there for me.

This past summer I was able to be part of an experience that I will never forget. I went with our church to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. This trip strengthened my faith in many ways. God was able to get 33,309 people to gather in the same place to worship him, and it was simply amazing. Every time I would see everybody together at the Superdome, I would get chills from feeling God's presence within us all. Every day of the trip I was able to witness God's good works, whether it was seeing the kindness some people have to offer, or hearing someone's talented voice. Overall it was a life changing experience, and I feel so blessed that I got to go.

Because of faith, my relationship with God is strong. I know through faith that God is always by my side. If I ever feel lost or alone, he is with me to comfort me, and to guide me. Without faith I would not know any of this.

I love the Lord God with all my heart, soul, and mind, and nothing will ever change that. God has said over and over again how much he loves us all, and nothing that we ever do can make him change his mind.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8

So many people have made a big impact on my faith and I am truly thankful for them. I thank all of my past Sunday school teachers, my confirmation small group leaders, Michelle and Joy, and the adult chaperones of the New Orleans trip. I also thank my grandparents, aunts and uncles, brother and sister, and my Godparents for always being there for me. I say a big thank you to Pastor Joe and Pastor Siri for being extremely supportive and helpful through this journey, also a thank you to Terry Lee who was our mentor this fall. Last of all I thank my parents for helping me get to this point. Thank you for being there in the very beginning and guiding me to become who I am now.

Confirmation is definitely not the end to my faith journey, it is just the beginning. I would like to work on my faith by going on more youth trips and doing more good works. My faith will continue to grow as I learn more about God and see him working in my everyday life.

Shayla Fossum is a sophomore at Hillsboro High School.

Saturday, March 2, 2013
Pastor Siri Strommen Campbell
Philippians 4:8

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Churches are unique in that you come in contact with everyone from babies to elderly and everyone in between. As a pastor it is a privilege to watch youth grow and mature, to be there for milestones as couples marry and baptize their children. But it is really neat to meet those wise sages who quietly exude compassion, forgiveness, and deep faith.

Everywhere I go I meet these sages. These are people who have full and sometimes painful lives, yet they have become more kind because of it. They have seen darkness in their life and so they are more forgiving. They have taught and shaped for a generation and now they are content to let others shape and teach. Sometimes these mentors are quiet and sometimes they wear purple and silver eyeshadow. But always they are quick to laugh at themselves. They offer advice, but only when asked. They are content with what they have and do not need anything. They are always grateful for the smallest gift.

When I started to notice the quiet wisdom of these elders I realized- that is exactly how I want to be one day! I want to grow up to be just like them!

I believe that one of the qualities of God is the ability to transform and shape us, to purify us. This happens in the "deaths" and "resurrections" that occur in our lives. When our hearts are broken, when luck seems to fail, we can grow more angry, anxious, and fearful, or we can grow more forgiving, compassionate, and wise. Believing in God for me is also about believing that God can change me. I will never be perfect, never without fault. However, I can grow wise. I can increase my capacity to love. I can see the world in new ways. That will never end.

The elders also teach me how to think, ponder, and dive deeply into the true, just, pure, excellent things of life. Give them your energy and they will shape you. I believe Paul knew that and was asking the Philippian church to do this. Paul wanted that church to become a church of compassionate sages, mentoring the rest of the world.

Sunday, March 3, 2013
Luke 13:1-9

Repent or Perish

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."' '



Monday, March 4, 2013

Carissa Swanson

Colossians 3:12

As Gods chosen one, holy and beloved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

My name is Carissa Swanson, I chose this verse because it reflects a little bit of myself. You may know me by my name, but no one really knows much about me. I am a bit shy and like to keep things personal, I am not one to talk about a lot of things in my life, but today I am going to share a part of my story. Allow me to open up a part of my life and share with you a little of who I am.

To all of you I look like a normal teenage girl, but what you don't know is that I have an illness. Something no one understands, something that not many people can put themselves in my shoes and feel what I feel. I do not have a definite diagnosis, but what I can tell you is that I have Celiac Disease and an intolerance to lactose. Trying to eliminate certain foods in my diet has not made this any easier nor has it fixed the underlying problem. I have been in and out of the doctors for quite some time now and have taken many tests, but still cannot find an actual answer to some of the problems that I face every day. This has been going on since I was in the 6th grade, and it is frustrating and can be a bit scary at times. I wake up in the morning feeling ill, and this continues throughout the day until I go to bed. This is something that seems to have taken over most of my life. I have a hard time doing the normal things that everyone around me does. I always have the thought of this illness in the back of my mind and it stops me from doing everyday things. Going to school is hard, traveling out of town, or hanging out with friends is not always an easy task.

Despite all of the physical things that are going on with me I think the hardest **part is how this will impact my future. I don't know if I will be able to go to college, get a job, or even have a family one day.** My whole life is pretty much based on this illness.

I hope that over time I will better understand all the things that are going on in my life and why it seems that God chose me and my family to be the way we are. There are so many things in this life that get left unsaid, that get left unanswered, and that are just confusing and complicated. I have learned that you take each day with patience, respect, love, and clarity to make it on to the next day. I also hope that one day everything is going to be okay. Whether or not I fully believe in God is unknown at this point in my life. But one day I will hopefully gain more trust and more faith in the man that we call God.

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

Vicki Dahlstrom

“The Wise Man Built His House Upon The Rock” by Unknown

There is a children’s song which goes like this:

*“The wise man built his house upon the rock, and the rain came tumbling down.
The rain came down and the floods came up, and the house on the rock stood fast.
The foolish man built his house upon the sand, and the rains came tumbling down.
The rain came down and the floods came up, and the house on the sand went
SMASH!”*

One of my favorite hymns is “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less,” especially when sung to the Marine Hymn tune. It has been used at several family funerals, including that of my husband, Bryan, in November of 2008. The first verse couldn’t be more strong and explicit:

*“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness,
No merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ the solid rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.”*

I have stood on sinking sand at times in my life. I have lacked wisdom or direction, have been tempted to take an easier route, or to quit altogether. Through the Holy Spirit’s power, I see Jesus as my rock and salvation. My life depends on faith and trust in Him and on His grace. How can I walk through the valleys and shadows of life without Him? How can I love others without His example? How can I face daily life - **even with all the blessings** I’ve been given - without the promise of everlasting arms making it all meaningful?

In this Lenten season, I need to humbly ponder these things, and “wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

Vicki Dahlstrom has been an OSLC member since 1974. She has a daughter Beth and son-in-law Darin and two grandsons. She enjoys music, reading, and crafts.

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Teran Harmon

“Light the Fire” by Bill Maxwell

*I stand to praise you
But I fall on my knees
My spirit is willing
But my flesh is so weak*

(Chorus)

*So light the fire (light the fire)
In my soul (in my weary soul)
Fan the flame (fan the flame)
Make me whole (make my spirit whole)
Lord you know (Lord you know)
Just where I've been (where I've been)
So light the fire in my heart again*

*I feel Your arms around me
As the power of Your healing begins
You breathe new life through me
Like a mighty, rushing wind (Chorus)*

“Light The Fire” is by far my favorite Christian song experience. I say experience because as a junior in high school I attended Young Life Youth Camp in the mountains of Colorado. Complete with a ropes course to test your faith and trust in yourself, awesome music, and beautiful surroundings, camp was the first time I was able to express my acceptance of and love for God and actually enjoy Christian fun!

As I've gotten more involved at Our Savior's, I'm reminded of these early faith experiences. Just as it did when I was a junior in high school, “Light The Fire” still speaks to me. It is the perfect song for a Sunday morning when you are tired and need to rejuvenate for the upcoming week. It is also a great song for reflection. God knows where you are and where you have been and he warms your life and your soul for the battle of life.

Teran serves on the Board of Christian Education at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. She is also the Sunday School Superintendent. She has two daughters, Harmon and Bently.

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Mariah Linnel

A while ago, the girls in my grade got in a big fight. Lots of tension, lots of hurt feelings. It actually blew up after a while and nobody could take this immense amount of pressure anymore. We didn't know what to do or even what to say. This class, so close, didn't know how to fix this problem, the elephant in the room.

Eventually we just decided to hold a meeting. We all knew each other; it wasn't like we were meeting for the first time. So we tried talking it out. And while we were all trying to figure out how to solve this problem, I imagined my life without these girls. My friends. I was overwhelmed with the idea. When I have a question, or even want someone to go rollerblading with, they weren't going to be there. I broke down. To know that they could be gone in an instant was just terrifying. I couldn't handle it anymore. I knew that we had to get better and had to get along because I needed them, we all needed each other. I was getting sick of treating each other like we were enemies because we've known each other since we were little.

And while I was trying to decide what to do, I realized something that I've been hearing since forever really. What I finally realized was that God really did put us all on Earth for a certain reason. Whether it would be to make someone laugh, become a pastor, or even the first lady president. Be a friend. Be a BEST friend. God created us for a purpose, and when we find out what it is, we'll know. He put us on Earth because we all truly have a purpose. And each one of us is surely going to fulfill ours.

Mariah is a junior at Hillsboro High School.

Friday, March 8, 2013

John Bartels

Psalm 23

My life changed forever on March 17, 2000. My normal morning at work changed drastically when my vehicle hit the curb and I collapsed beside my vehicle. A police officer who had been following me called for emergency medical assistance. I then lost consciousness and drifted in and out of consciousness until April 1 when I was able to breathe on my own. Below are reflections of that time from my daughter, Kandy.

It was just like any other day, that day. March 17, 2000. The phone rang and it was my brother, Kory. He said "Dad has had a stroke". I will never forget those five words. I replied "Oh my God, is he going to be okay?" He then put the doctor on the phone. The doctor asked me where I lived. I told him California. He said "you better get on the next plane out". So I did. When I arrived at the hospital Dad was hooked up to a ventilator, which was pretty much keeping him alive. My mom was so worried and sad, as were my brothers. Every day we stayed by Dad's side. We even got hotel rooms so we could make sure someone was with him at all times. I remember at one point the doctor coming out and telling my mom that dad had a 50/50 chance to survive and that he was currently being kept alive by machines. And he asked her if she thought it would be best to pretty much pull the plug and Mom, without any hesitation said, "Absolutely not! Bart isn't ready to go and I'm not ready to let him go!" So after a long period of time on life support dad came around. That was the happiest day of all our lives! Praise God!

Dad had a long way to go after that. He pretty much had to learn everything all over again. He was such a trooper and never gave up. It seems like no matter what my dad goes through he just keeps on going. He is one of the strongest men I have ever known. All of our lives changed that day, March 17th, 2000. But I guess you could say it changed for the better as it made all of us a lot stronger people than we were before. And we owe that to our dad. When something happens to someone that is bad, a lot of people would just call it quits, but not Dad. He just kept going - and to this day he is like the Energizer Bunny! He just keeps going!! I am so proud to call you my dad and will be forever grateful to you! Thanks for being my father. I love you. Love, Kandy.

I'm thankful for my family who took care of me following my stroke/aneurism and for the care I receive now at Sanford Hillsboro Care Center. I started attending church services at the Care Center and that led me to join OSLC this past year.

John "Bart" Bartels is a resident of Sanford Hillsboro Care Center. He has five grown children and 17 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Saturday, March 9, 2013

Beth Christianson-Melby

Psalm 51 - A Prayer For Cleansing and Pardon

“...wash me and I shall be whiter than snow...”

I was baptized at three months old at Halstad Lutheran Church in a small service held in the afternoon in its chapel. I'm sure my parents were a little surprised by this baby girl born just shy of their 40th birthdays and more than six years after their last child. As good Christians, my parents chose who would be my Godparents carefully. My Godparents treated me like a daughter even giving me gifts for my birthday, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Easter, and just because, until they died just a few years ago. They were extraordinary people of faith. We sat behind them every Sunday in church; shared coffee during fellowship time. They were my parents best friends and had a remarkable impact on my life.

From them, and my parents, I learned that God offers heaven as a gift, but we do good works for the betterment of His world. They taught me that it is important to serve the church in whatever way we can, to use our gifts from God for the benefit of others. And to do it with a happy heart, expecting nothing in return.

I rejoice in my faith and the strong foundation that my parents and Godparents instilled in me. I rejoice in being a Lutheran and the comforting words that we sing in Psalm 51 as we ask God to wash us of our sin.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
And take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And uphold me with your free spirit.*

Faith, heaven, and the grace of God are gifts. We are all sinners and that can be overwhelming at times, if we dwell on it. Isn't it better to trust in the Lord and know that, if we only ask, He will wash us, as He did during our baptism, as He does every day, and make us whiter than snow?

Beth Christianson-Melby has been a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church since 2005. She serves on the Local Missions committee.

Sunday, March 10, 2013

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable:

The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' ' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe - the best one - and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." ' '

Monday, March 11, 2013

Mariah Fossum

Psalm 139:14

“You are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

I like this psalm a lot because in it God is talking to me and anybody else who is reading it. **“You are fearfully and wonderfully made.”** God created us to fear and love Him and he made us all wonderfully. We are all beautiful in our own ways all with very special talents.

Faith has changed my life in so many ways and I can't imagine living without it. Without faith in my life I wouldn't know that Jesus died on the cross for me to save my sins. He died for all of us so that one day we can all be together again with Christ. Without faith I couldn't go from day to day without knowing that God is always there for me, he will always forgive me, and one day we will all be together again in heaven.

Why do I exist? How come each and every one of us is here? God has a plan for everyone and we were all written in His book from the very beginning. He loves us all so much and treats everyone like His own son. Even on the worst of days when I feel like God isn't there I know that he will always be there to help and guide me.

We were all saved by the grace of God. This means that God has always and will always know what we will do. Even before we do it he forgives us and has already saved us from our sins.

During my faith journey I have always had people that were there for me, helping me learn the word of God.

Being confirmed was an important step in my faith journey, but it didn't stop there. I will continue to work on my faith each and every day, so that my faith keeps growing. I will always have God in my life.

Mariah Fossum is a junior at Hillsboro High School.

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Tessa Beck

Galatians 2:20

“And it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith for the Son of God.”

I was baptized Presbyterian and didn't join Our Savior's Lutheran Church until I was eight years old. At the time, I didn't understand the importance of being brought to church by my parents, learning the Bible stories, and starting that early connection with God. Now that I am older, I realize how different my faith would be if my parents wouldn't have brought me to church.

Recently, I have become more responsible for my own faith and, in turn, it has grown a great deal. As I get older, I naturally get more out of every sermon. It's helpful to me to learn new verses and stories. The verse I chose makes me feel more involved in God's family. It is a powerful verse that has stuck with me for many years.

Along the way, I have been fortunate with my beliefs, but if I said it was always easy, I'd be lying. Anyone who has gone through something tough in their lives understands when I say that sometimes it's hard to know what God's plans are during those times, and may have even questioned him. During the moments I felt like I was pulling away from God, I was actually coming closer to him than I ever thought possible. Knowing he accepts me in his family, and loves me unconditionally, whether I questioned him or not, was the kind of reliability I needed and received at the time. It wasn't just the comfort in knowing I could pray to Him whenever I needed strength, but also it was God's love shown through the people in my family and community giving their support. Experiencing that was the ultimate demonstration of what faith can do for a person.

It takes a full congregation to help a new faith grow and I'm blessed to have had such a wonderful faith community to support me.

Tessa Beck is a senior at Hillsboro High School. She participates in dance and was on the state champion cross country team.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Doug Melby

Proverbs 2:2-5

“Turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

I am drawn more to understand rather than to feel God. The verse from Proverbs, I chose for confirmation. I was raised in the Lutheran Church, but gradually my mother became Pentecostal and evangelical. Our family moved through several churches following my mother's quest, eventually ending up in the Assemblies of God. My intellectual bent did not work well with the view of spirits everywhere, spiritual warfare, speaking in tongues, and casting out of demons that my mother routinely did. My rebellion was to become a Unitarian. For those who aren't familiar, a Unitarian service is like going to a college lecture with the congregation asking questions during the sermon and presenting their own viewpoints. They are spiritual; they seek a better world, but are not necessarily Christian. They support each other's path to spiritual understanding however they may understand it.

Eventually I made my way back to the Lutheran Church. Two hymns mean much to me: *How Great Thou Art* and *Simple Gifts*. To me they are different sides of the same coin. God is indeed great and powerful but often speaks to us softly and gently, requiring us to carefully listen; to *“...turn our ear to wisdom and apply our heart to understanding...”* as in the Proverb. I see God in how we try hard to make things be our way, and we have controversy in our families, our church, our community, but things seem to work out better by letting go and working for understanding. Here is where the Unitarian view has helped me, they *expect* everyone else to have different views and they *accept* those views; they don't try to change, they hope to understand and support.

Though not commonly found in the Lutheran tradition, *Simple Gifts*, which was danced to by the Shakers, to me describes how a humble quest for wisdom and understanding along with letting go and trusting in God allows things to work out for the best. I think of it as a dance with God's wisdom leading.

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain'd,
To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.*

Thursday, March 14, 2013
Pastor Siri Strommen Campbell
Revelation 21: 2-4

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

I have found this to be one of the most comforting verses in the Bible. I am at times, as many of us are, overwhelmed by sadness at the suffering of this world. I truly hate to hear stories about child abuse, animal abuse, or anything awful that happens to innocent young ones. I can't always avoid those stories. Sometimes as a pastor I listen to someone else bawling about their pain and suffering over such a story in their life. In times that like it is very common for humans to cry out in anger. Why is the world this way? Is God weak? Is the devil too strong? Is there a God at all?

I am deeply comforted by the accounts of many spiritual greats who speak of God and heaven. For example, Julian of Norwich was a nun who lived in the 1300's during the black plague and 100 years war. She saw suffering. In fact, she grew so ill she almost died and in the midst of her illness she had sixteen visions of God. She spoke of a God in whom there is only love. This God created all things and is connected to all things. She experienced for herself the utter peace of being in the presence of Jesus, so peaceful, in fact, that she believed nothing could ever shake her. Many people have had similar experiences of God across time and space. This is the "peace that passes all understanding" as Paul writes. In the midst of the chaos of life, we are sometimes given the gift of peace. It makes no sense! It is a foretaste of heaven.

Julian is also famous for saying that "all shall be well". She saw in her vision that one day all things would be well and one with God. No more suffering. No more tears. Only peace with God.

This is similar to the vision we see in Revelation (a highly misunderstood book!). God's desire is to be one with us and the moments that seem so overwhelming and painful on earth will not be that way in heaven. This doesn't make what we go through less hurtful, but it can give us a perspective we might not always see. This is not how it ends. There is more. God is at the end. All shall be well.

Friday, March 15, 2013

John Miller

John 8:7a

“You who are without sin cast the first stone.”

I could write pages on where my faith journey has taken me, but I want to talk about where I am today.

It really starts with just one question that was asked when I asked to get my son baptized six years ago. This question was just a simple one, but as I sit back and reflect on it, it was kind of life changing for me. Pastor Paul Grothe said he would be more than happy to baptize my son, and he asked me; “what can I do for you.” At the time I didn’t think much about the question. I hadn’t lost my faith, but I wasn’t looking for anything from a church. I had tried a couple of different churches over the years, but hadn’t felt any connection. So we got Sean baptized, and came to several Sunday services, and I started to realize that there was a void in my spiritual life. I also enjoyed the closeness that I felt while being at church. So over the next couple years I was satisfied to just quietly enjoy my new found home, but I think Pastor Paul saw more, and slowly he got me more involved.

So what started as just a simple question has evolved into me finding a place to call home, a place where I feel close to God, and a place that has embraced me and my boys.

John Miller is a member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church. He is involved in Our Savior’s Light and The Fire (bands).

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Laura Grinde

When thinking back on my confirmation journey I recall three pieces that stand out. There is a song that to this day brings me peace. There was a person who through their kindness and thoughtfulness brought me security, and there is a simple way of reflecting on daily life. These small pieces of my journey helped me through an awkward time and continue to be meaningful to me today.

I always felt as though I was an outsider of sorts in our confirmation class. I went to an out-of-town school while everyone else attended the larger schools close by. During those inherently awkward years, it felt like a big deal. Sharing **a demographic, age, and general community didn't seem to bridge that gap.** Though sometimes uncomfortable, I have a positive feeling when I think about the experience. Looking back, being out of my comfort zone may have allowed me to better soak in some of the lessons learned.

“Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord” is a song that I've found particularly moving since my confirmation experience began. It's distinctly prayerful, straightforward, and just feels like a conversation I might have with God. I developed the strong connection to the song during the first few months of classes. We would sing it with guitar accompaniment at every confirmation class. It was intended to quiet the group down and bring us together. It felt **like a moment to clear one's head and focus on the reason for being there.** It made me feel at ease even out of my normal comfort zone.

The second piece of my confirmation experience was my small group leader. During confirmation, our large class would break into groups of 5-7 people, each led by an adult. I had a small group leader who traveled with my group for the entire four years. I was blessed; my leader was wonderful. She was attentive and genuinely interested in our group. She always had a smile on her face and greeted me personally, asking about school, activities, family, and my day. Her enthusiasm changed my outlook and gave me confidence. She went above and beyond to make me feel special and engaged.

The third piece of my experience is incredibly basic. Each class we were required to say aloud our high point and low point of the week. I became hooked on this practice over the four years and practice this reflection daily now. It is such an effective way of putting a time period in perspective; of admitting failures or disappointments and acknowledging successes.

I will remember the highlights of the bible verses taught, but I have realized that these basic parts of my confirmation experience have shaped my life the most since then. Take time to open your heart and clear your head. Take time to make someone know they are special. Take time to reflect.

Sunday, March 17, 2013
John 12:1-8

Mary Anoints Jesus

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'



Monday, March 18, 2013

Gannon Miller

God sometimes works in mysterious ways. For example, the night before I was supposed to have the rough draft of my faith statement done, my Godparents who are strong in faith, came to spend the night. My Godfather sat down and helped me write my faith statement.

Faith comes in many different ways. First, through my family. My grandparents have always been a big influence on my faith and what it means to have a good **relationship with the church. Even during deer hunting we couldn't miss church.** Every year before Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner we all needed to tell everyone what we are thankful for.

Second, through the church. Going to church is like getting together with an **extended part of my family. I've learned a lot from the time I started Sunday school until now.** If you are ever down and need help, you can always turn to the church for comfort and guidance because God is always there to listen.

And third, through the outdoors. The outdoors is where I find a lot of **comfort, sitting in my deer stand thinking and admiring God's creation. I find myself praying that I see a big buck and that we have a safe hunt.**

Faith is like a **two-way street, it's all right to ask for things, but you have to do something back for God, like going to church or praying.** There are also a lot of ways that God is active in our lives. For example, God has given me a good **healthy family, and even though you can't see God, he is present in our lives and he is there protecting us. In the future I plan to stay on God's path of faith by going to church and doing good deeds for other people.**

Gannon is a junior at Hillsboro Public School. He enjoys hunting and racing his Wisconsin Modified racecar.

Tuesday, March 19, 2013
Pastor Siri Strommen Campbell
Psalm 8:3

“They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season.”

The two biggest influences on my faith life have been my parents. That’s about right, since the research clearly supports that. Yet, this can be both a positive or a negative. If your parents are neglectful, abusive, or unavailable somehow, that deeply impacts how you see God. If your parents raise you with little or no faith, you are raised to believe that faith isn’t important. Parents are important in shaping their child.

Luckily, I had two very loving parents. My father was a Lutheran pastor and my mom is a therapist. Both raised me with an unconditional love and acceptance. They taught me and showed me that God was loving and gracious. As I grew and learned more about God, I also started to have many questions. I didn’t fit in well with the youth group at my home church and the Christians at college seemed a different breed. I started to doubt myself. I grew frustrated with the Christian face and message I saw around me. I didn’t agree but still couldn’t articulate what it was that bothered me and why.

However, throughout my faith journey, I never once doubted God. I knew that God loved me and that God was worth my time. This knowledge sustained me until I found my way through my deep questions back into an identity with the church and now as a pastor.

Still to this day I have long conversations with my parents about God, religion, and life. They sit and listen to me and we speak more as equals now. Yet, their nurturing me in the faith was a true gift. A gift I can only repay by raising my own children in the faith. I do this, I hope, as Jon and I pray with them, envelope them with church life, play hymns on the piano, and most importantly - teach them that they are deeply loved and cherished. I hope that as they grow and find their own journey, the love of God is the one thing they never, ever doubt.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Brenda Stallman

Psalm 46:10

“Be still and know that I am God.”

I rely on this verse many times a day when asked to meet deadlines, when immediate thoughts are negative, when daily events in our community and world are so unsettling, and when my impatience does nothing to bring more immediate rewards.

What has been most impactful in my faith development are the encounters and experiences I have had as a parish nurse. I had not given any thought to parish nursing until my dad was struck with lung cancer for the second time 12 years ago. Our family had the good fortune to have the services of a parish nurse, **Joan, who served my parents’ small rural church. She was the bridge between my parents and us kids, doctors, friends, and their church family.** She calmed our fears, prayed with us, ran errands, sat with my dad to give my mom respite, and she remains a family friend to this day.

Joan was so helpful to us in such a difficult time; it became apparent that I, too, wanted to be a parish nurse. Though I have other full-time work, I derive my greatest sense of fulfillment from health ministry. To me, there is no greater reward than joining a journey of someone facing a difficult time and being able to ease their burden, even if in a very small way. Often, just listening provides this relief.

In the Bible, God uses David’s experience as a shepherd to teach that God would give protection and guidance in his life. With a slingshot and a small stone, a very small David was able to kill the giant Goliath who was mocking God’s people. David had faith in God as his armor giving him the protection and courage he needed for success in his fight with Goliath. My faith challenge is **being strong and confident in God’s protection in our daily and worldly struggles with situations and people that are the size of Goliath and seemingly impossible, but reachable when we trust God for his protection.**

God’s armor comes to me in the verse *“Create in me a clean heart O God”* (Psalm 51:10). It works within me like an eraser on the chalkboard. Reciting this verse helps me aspire to be better and, through the grace of God and His forgiveness, wipe the slate clean so that I am stronger in life’s challenges.

Brenda received her parish nurse training at Concordia College and is the volunteer parish nurse at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church. She works as Director of Traill District Health Unit, which provides public health services for Traill County. She and her husband, Greg, have two sons, Brady and Jace.

Thursday, March 21, 2013
Pastor Joe Johnson
1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 25-27

The Body is One Unit

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink... so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

When I think about what it means to be “church”, I can’t help but to think about Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians. Paul has used the metaphor of the human body, which has many parts, though it is one, as an analogy of the unity of the church. Verse 12 exemplifies the fascination of how the body co-operates with diversity and unity. The conclusion of verse 12, however, offers a surprising twist: “For just as the body is one and has many members... so it is with Christ.” We expect Paul to say, ‘so it is with the Church’. Instead, by identifying the many members of the church directly with Christ, Paul seems to press beyond mere analogy.

In reference to the body, Plato says that when a man hurts his finger, his whole frame feels the hurt and sympathizes with the part affected. The injured man does not say, “my finger has a pain.’ He says, ‘I have a pain.’ There is an “I”, a personality, which gives unity to the man and varying parts of the body. What the “I” is to the body, Christ is to the Church. It is in him that all the diverse parts find their unity.

Paul illustrates that the diversity of the unity is absolutely necessary. This picture of the body that Paul has painted is only effective if each part of the body functions properly. God has called each of us to serve a different part. The interdependence of the members of the body is demonstrated by stating that the members that seem to be weaker are indispensable and should be treated with the greatest respect. If one member suffers, we suffer together. If one member is honored, we are honored together.

One of the many things that has impressed me about Our Savior’s Lutheran is the care people give each other. We, together, are the body of Christ. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, we celebrate and rejoice together. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need for you”. The head cannot say to the feet, “I have no need for you”. Each part of the body is indispensable. God will not say to you, I have no need for you. Because you are indispensable!

Friday, March 22, 2013

Tatiana Berge

Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.”

The only way I can think of explaining my faith is with a metaphor.

One Wednesday after church I asked Mrs. Lee how people made bridges a long time ago. It was extremely off topic at the time, but makes a great metaphor today. Did they start off with a pebble and then kept precisely placing rocks and stones in strategic places to build the bridge? To break this down and explain my faith with it, I believe that God gave us that first pebble and other people helped by giving rocks and pebbles too. I believe that my mom, dad, grandparents, Mrs. Lee, and Pastors gave me larger rocks to, **metaphorically speaking, “build my bridge”**. **When I say they gave me bigger rocks I’m saying they helped me start building my own faith.** My faith has just started and I believe it continues even when I go to heaven, but even with this small beginning I already have a path to my bridge and a couple pebbles **and rocks that I’ve been using to begin building it.** I believe that God already has the blueprints of my bridge and I need to be creative and engineer it. I also believe that God will continue putting people in my life to help with the construction.

So now that I have the foundation of my faith I am done borrowing from my parents and can begin adding onto theirs and create my own.

Tatiana Berge is a junior at Hillsboro High School.

Saturday, March 23, 2013

Joy McSparron

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

Hi, my name is Joy. I decided to write my own faith statement to be just like the 9th graders. I love my Jesus with all my heart. I can't ever remember a time when I didn't love Him. When I was in elementary school I wanted to be a missionary and a nurse. God allowed me to be an EMT and to help in our church with confirmation-close enough. I guess maybe being a missionary can just mean that God gives you a mission to accomplish.

Since I retired, I've been given the opportunity to share in the ministry of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. It's been some of the best times that I've had, spending time with Pastor Joe. To be able to work with the youth in confirmation, to go on youth retreats, to help them write their faith statements, to participate in "See You at the Pole," and watching the "Nooma" videos with the ninth graders, to see their faith and love of Jesus in action. I know how much Jesus wants these young people to come to Him and love Him as much as I do. Jesus has put it on my heart to love them and reach out to them and show them His great love for them. They are special and unique, but mostly, I feel they are mine, and I claim them for the Lord.

I want to be one of those people who roar with the love of Jesus but I'm afraid I'm just a lamb reaching out one person at a time in my own quiet way. Oh, to go out and save the world. Sometimes I feel such an urgency, like God is saying there isn't much time left and we need to reach them NOW. Sharing Jesus' love with the world is what it's all about. Jesus said to "Go and make disciples of all the earth." I want to go and make disciples, but more than anything, I want to be one.

Joy is a Deacon and volunteer at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. She has taken classes at Luther Seminary as part of the GIFTS (Growing In Faith Through Service) program, a lay leadership training program sponsored by the Eastern North Dakota Synod.

Palm Sunday, March 24, 2013
Luke 23:1-49

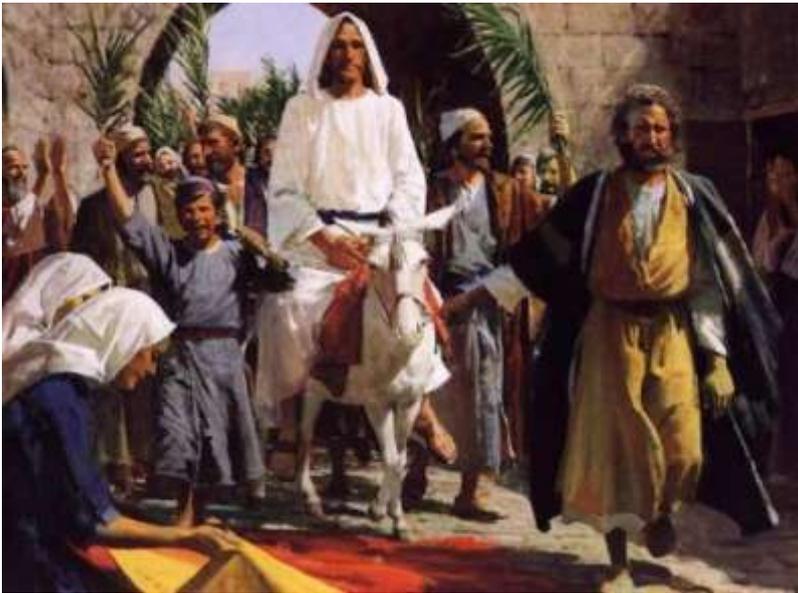
Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel!'

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!'

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.



Monday, March 25, 2013

Carrie McTaggart

Phillippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

It's a simple verse, but it's a verse that I repeat daily. This verse has become my go to verse through out my faith. Knowing that God is behind me in everything I do and is pushing me forward helps me to accomplish anything I set my mind to. I use this verse during my volleyball season, when I have something difficult at school, or am facing something that may seem a little "scary." To me, it's just a daily reminder that I don't have time in my life to be fearless. Take chances. Seize the moment. God gives me strength and is right by my side through each step.

Carrie McTaggart is a junior at Hillsboro High School. She's involved in FCCLA, SADD, National Honor Society, North Dakota Leadership Seminar, Student Council, Choir, OSLC Youth group, and The Fire (band) at OSLC. She loves spending time with family and friends, singing, and traveling. She recently started a bible study for OSLC youth and is enjoying growing in her faith with her peers!

Tuesday, March 26 2013

Pastor Joe Johnson

Matthew 18:2-4

The Death and Resurrection of an Imaginary Friend: A Childlike Faith

“He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

One of the themes of Lent is facing the reality of death. Here is a story about death and resurrection and having a childlike faith.

We had just returned to Luther Seminary from my pastoral internship in Kodiak Alaska. We had to say goodbye to our internship congregation, community, and friends. This doesn't sound very traumatic, but for our kids, Wyatt (4) and Charlotte Jane (2), this was a big adjustment.

From the time we left our internship site, to the time we arrived at seminary, Wyatt developed an imaginary friend. Actually, it was his imaginary brother, “Bob”. Wyatt and “Bob” would go on many adventures and have a great time together.

A few weeks after being back at seminary, a close family friend passed away. Amanda and I explained to Wyatt and Charlotte that our friend had died and was going to heaven to be with God. The next day Wyatt seemed really sad.

Amanda asked, “What’s wrong?”

[Wyatt] “I’m really sad.”

[Amanda] “Why?”

[W] “I’m really sad because I won’t be able to see Bob anymore.”

[A] “Why can’t you see Bob anymore?”

[W] “I won’t be able to see Bob anymore because Bob died. I’m really sad because I’m going to miss him”

Wyatt’s eyes filled with tears. We held him as the tears began to stream down his face.

“It’s okay though,” Wyatt said. “Bob is going to heaven to be with God.”

We continued to console him, but Wyatt continued to grieve the rest of the day.

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The next morning, Wyatt woke up and started talking about all of the things he and “Bob” were going to do that day. I said to Wyatt, “I thought Bob was dead?” Wyatt simply responded, “Nope, he’s not dead anymore!” That was the end of Wyatt’s grieving, and there was no more talk about Bob’s death.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells us to become like little children. Unfortunately, grieving and healing does not happen overnight. Grief is a long and painful process. But because of Jesus’ own death and resurrection, we live a new life of faith, from death to life. On the cross, Christ took everything that was ours: our sin, our pain, and our death. In exchange, Christ gave us everything that was his: his mercy, and his grace, his life. As a gift, God gives us mercy, grace, and life through the death and resurrection of his son Jesus Christ.

The death and resurrection of “Bob” is a reminder that we are called to have faith like a child. It’s a simple story about a man named Jesus. He’s not dead anymore!



Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Beth Christianson-Melby

Hebrews 13:2

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

All are welcome!

I love the sound of that!

One of my favorite things about being part of the ELCA is the concept of hospitality. That no matter who you are, what your economic status is, what your abilities are, or what brought you to church, all are welcome to worship Him in this safe sanctuary.

This text reminds me just how important it is to be welcoming. The average Lutheran invites someone to church once every 26 years! Fortunately, soon after moving to Hillsboro, David Hetland extended an invitation to me to **come to Our Savior’s**. **What a difference those simple words have made in my life!** Joining OSLC has lead to some amazing friendships! Doug and I would not have met some of our closest friends, if not for the invitation extended to us nine years ago.

In a world of troubles, the church should be the easiest place on earth. A place where people can forget, for just a little while, the challenges they face in life. Church should be a place where participation should be assured and encouraged.

My father was struck by polio when he was 21. He never walked on his own again. He was on crutches for more than 50 years, and in a wheelchair the last few years of his life. He never let it slow him down. He was truly amazing in his abilities. But I also know that life was rarely easy for him. Because of his experience and my own of watching and helping him (I was his errand runner and little helper), I’m sort of programmed to think about others and how things affect them.

When I see someone who needs just a little help to make life just a bit easier, I **try to do what I can... open a door, hold an elevator, clear a path. It doesn’t take much to show God’s love.**

When I meet a new person in town, I try to remember what an impact David’s simple invitation had on my life. If I can give someone new that same experience or help make life just a little bit easier for them, I know that they will feel the blessings of this community.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet



Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer

robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'

The New Commandment

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Good Friday, March 29, 2013
Pastor Siri Strommen Campbell

“There in God’s Garden” ELW #342

There in God’s garden stand the Tree of Wisdom, whose leaves hold forth the healing of the nations. Tree of all knowledge, Tree of all compassion, Tree of all Beauty.

Its name is Jesus, name that says, “Our Savior!” There on its branches see the scars of suffering; See there the tendrils of our human selfhood feed on its lifeblood.

My husband and I met in college. We were both music majors and both had the same voice teacher. When we married and both went to seminary, our love of music continued to bind us. We enjoyed learning not just about the Bible and theology, but about the music of the church.

We both love discovering new hymns. At that time, the above song was in the hymnal supplement *With One Voice*. I was so moved by the imagery of the Tree of Life as Jesus (read the rest of the verses), that I taught it to the Sunday school kids at the church where I led music.

This beautiful and mostly unknown hymn uses the biblical imagery of the Tree of Life to speak of the cross. The Tree of Life is a mysterious image we first see in Genesis in the Garden of Eden. In that story, God sends Adam and Eve away so that they won’t eat from the Tree of Life as well. We are not meant to be immortal.

Yet, we see the Tree of Life again in Revelation when John sees the city Jerusalem open for all the nations. Here, the Tree is in the midst of the city and people eat of it freely, enjoying life forever with God.

In between Genesis and Revelation, the idea of the Tree of Life continues to pop up. The Tree of Life becomes a symbol of wisdom and of relationship with God. When Jesus dies on the cross, it is as if he is offering the Tree of Life to all people once and for all. Take and eat. Life forever. God gives freely the fruit of healing for the nations. Amen!

Saturday, March 30, 2013

Pastor Joe Johnson

John 20:1

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.”

During these 40 days of Lent we have walked together in this Lenten journey of prayer, repentance, reflection, self-examination, discernment and discipline. We have walked with each other, sharing each other’s stories of joys and sorrows, pain and hope, life and death. This Lenten journey was a journey that led us together... to the cross.

The story doesn’t end here. The story continues & our journey continues... A journey that leads from the cross to the resurrection... A journey from death to life.

Now, we are reminded of the promise that we receive in Christ... the promise that out of sorrow comes joy, out of pain comes hope, and out of death comes life. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ... this promise is fulfilled!

He has risen... He has risen indeed. The stone has been rolled away... He is risen!

The reality is... we all have “stones” in our lives.

Sometimes these stones are really big stones, boulders.

The giant stones of sin...

the stones of addiction...

the stones of abuse.

Sometimes these stones are small stones, pebbles.

Small things like how we treat our boss, employees, or CO-workers...

Small things like how we react to conflict or disagreement...

Small things like stress, lack of patience, lack of time...

No matter what size of stones you have in your life. No matter what size of stones you have in your heart, God has promised to roll them away. If God can roll away the stone of death... he can certainly roll away any stone that you have in your life. The stone has been rolled away... God has prevailed... The debt has been paid... Victory has been won!

Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories and faith statements during this Lenten journey. Easter is not the end... it is only the beginning. The journey continues!

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013
Luke 24: 1-12

The Resurrection of Jesus

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, **‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’** Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.



Notes

Notes

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