



Faith Lutheran Church Joliet, IL

MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER

Rev. Jane Perkolup, Pastor

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OUR MISSION: *Sharing the Love of God*

OUR VISION GOALS: *Feed the Hungry Connect with New Neighbors
Grow Caring Relationships Engage Adults in Christian Education*

From the Pastor's desk



Recently we met as a congregation to formulate our budget for the year ahead. Following that, we have been asked to make our pledges; many of you have as of this writing and if you haven't, I hope that you will prayerfully consider what your response will be. This seems an appropriate time to share a few thoughts with you on the topic of stewardship.

There are a few simple terms that are used by the church in accordance with stewardship. First of all, the term "stewardship" itself. The concept comes from the book of Genesis when, after God created the earth and all its inhabitants, God gave humankind the position as care-taker of all that God created and continues to create. Rather than a position of power, stewardship is a servant position requiring all the gifts and skills that God has bestowed upon us. Modern day Christians are stewards of the earth, its inhabitants and the church.

A "pledge" is our commitment to the church in terms of our resources. Sometimes we are asked to fill out a "Time and Talent Sheet" which includes the personal talents and interests we have, so those can be shared amongst the various ministries of the church. When we are asked to fill out a "pledge card" our projected monetary contributions are shared with the resource committee chairman so those in charge of the finances can better estimate how we will be able to meet our budget; the "budget" being our plan of all the various ministries of the church and what is required to do them. Jesus' parting words to his disciples was to preach, teach, baptize and spread the Good News to every person throughout the world. Together, as the church, we work to accomplish that task.

The final term, "benevolence", refers to our giving to others. Now, if you believe that everything you have comes as a result of your hard work and effort and you decide to give to someone else, you would be called generous. But in the church, as a Christian, we believe that everything we have comes from God. As good stewards, we use our skills and talents to enhance these gifts and in thanksgiving to God. . . as a response. . . we model God's behavior and help others. That is what we call "Christian benevolence". And that is something we all, regardless of our situation or income, can do.

The total sum of our Benevolence in 2008 was \$16,888. This included \$3500 First Fruits Giving to ELCA Synod Benevolence, \$4,800 in scholarships and \$8,588 to the community including: Will Co. Sr. Services, Lamb's Fold, a Fire Shower, Living Alternatives Pregnancy Center, MS Walk, Lutheran World Relief, Crop Walk, local school kits, Blessing Bench Food Pantry, Angel Tree Families, Cookies to Servicemen Overseas, the Salvation Army and Prayer Blanket Outreach.

It's been a tough year for all of us, the economy is in terrible shape. And by all predictions, it's not going to clear up over-night. And yet, as the people of God we have made it through AND we have followed God's command to be good stewards.

THANK YOU and may God continue to bless you throughout the coming year as together we learn, and grow and support one another as people of God here at Faith.

Pastor Jane

SERVICE COMMITTEE NEWS

The last meeting of the Service Committee was held on February 4 at 12:30 p.m. at the church. The next meeting will take place on March 4 at 12:30 p.m., at which time we will be discussing the Easter Breakfast.

- The baby bottles are over and the bottles were picked up by Penny Greco of the Pregnancy Resource Group. We will find out how we did when I get the letter from them after they tally up all the change in the bottles. I will advise when I hear from them.
- We are currently collecting diapers for Lamb's Fold. We did this every Sunday in February. The total collected will be posted in early March.
- Our very first Potluck on February 11 was attended by about 22 people. We had a good time looking at old pictures and trying to put names with the faces from our memory banks. Our next Potluck will be March 11 at noon. We will be thinking GREEN by that time, I am sure. We hope to have Jay Riemer as our speaker. The sign-up sheet is posted in the narthex. Hope to see you there!
- The Service Committee will be hosting the Simple Supper on March 25.

Thank you,

Joann Smothers

Property Committee News

The ceiling tile in the office that was damaged by the roof leak has been replaced. I am watching the ceiling in the west entrance to see if it is still leaking. If it is, I will have it repaired. If not, I will replace the tile like I did in the office.

I see that the weather has warmed up enough to melt all the dirty snow. Now we can get some more clean snow and start all over again. Mother Nature is teasing us! Not to worry, because Brenda Dodge is doing an excellent job of keeping it plowed.



You may have noticed the collection box for empty inkjet cartridges in the narthex. This is an ongoing program that I initiated to raise a little money for our church. This costs us absolutely nothing, not even postage. We simply deposit our empty cartridges in the little square holes in the collection box, and when it gets 3/4 full I seal up the inner box and drop it off at UPS. Then, we wait about two weeks to receive our check in the mail. I can do a similar project with toner cartridges. I have to collect them first, then email the company and tell them how many I have, as well as the cartridge part numbers, and they tell me how much they will pay for each one. Different ones sell for different amounts. They then send me a shipping container, and I ship them off and wait for the check.

Thank you,

Dennis Cannon

FASTING IN THE WILDERNESS

As we move into March, Ash Wednesday is over and we are in the season of Lent. I've written about Lent before – you probably remember some of the key facts about its observance. The liturgical color is purple. The liturgy is sung to a different setting, the hymns are reflective and subdued, and the word "alleluia" is not used. So what else do we need to know?

Lent lasts for approximately forty days, excluding Sundays. The early Church set aside this time to recall the forty days that Jesus spent alone in the wilderness, before the events leading up to His final journey to Jerusalem. Now here a problem arises. While we want to memorialize Jesus' days in the wilderness, we don't know very much about what happened there. Other than a very interesting dialogue with the Devil (Matthew 4: 3-11), all we know about that time is that Jesus fasted and prayed. It would be difficult to make six weeks' worth of observance out of that, so instead we trace Jesus' ministry up to the fateful celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, as Christians we are enjoined by the traditional Church to observe the Lenten season with prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Now, prayer is something we should be doing anyway, and regarding almsgiving, you will hear more about that from the Resources Committee. But what is this business about fasting? Are we actually supposed to stop eating?

The answer is, the Church never took the term "fasting" quite literally. In Christian practice, fasting is something more like a disciplined diet than a total abstention from food and drink. After all, starving and dehydrating yourself is not good for your health. Our goal is to grow closer to God – not to make ourselves sick! Rather, in a religious fast we abstain from certain foodstuffs, usually the more luxurious ones. For example, in Western Europe, the Catholic Church typically forbade consumption of meat, while in Eastern Orthodox practice, fasting sometimes also included abstaining from eggs, milk, butter, cheese, fish, oil, and wine.

If you'd like to fast and pray with members of Faith Lutheran, you will have ample opportunities to do so this Lent. Every Wednesday evening from March 4 to April 1, we will have a "simple supper" at 6:15 p.m. followed by worship at 7:00 p.m. As the simple supper will consist basically of soup, bread, and perhaps some salad, it fulfills admirably the Christian concept of fasting. Sorry, there will be no filet mignon, no roast beef sandwiches, no sumptuous desserts; remember, this is preparation for worship, not a feast of gluttony! And if you come for the fast, stay for the prayers and leave an offering. That way, you've fulfilled all three of your obligations, at least for a day.

Of course, you can observe Lent by yourself or with your family on any day, not just Wednesday, and we hope you will. One Christian writer suggests that we keep the fast by turning to prayer whenever we start craving a particularly tempting food. So when you'd really like a slice of juicy pie, try praying instead. It will improve your relationship with God, and who knows? It might even be good for your waistline. Come join us – and Jesus – by fasting in the wilderness.

Charles R. Wolf
Chair, Worship Committee



To "Let Go" Takes Love

To "let go" does not mean to stop caring, it means that I can't do it for someone else.

To "let go" is not to cut myself off, it is the realization that I can't control another.

To "let go" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

To "let go" is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To "let go" is not to try to change or blame another, it is to make the most of myself.

To "let go" is not to care for, but to care about.

To "let go" is not to fix, but to be supportive.

To "let go" is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

To "let go" is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes,
but to allow others to effect their own destinies.

To "let go" is not to be protective, it is to permit another to face reality.

To "let go" is not to deny, but to accept.

To "let go" is not to nag, scold, or argue,
but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

To "let go" is not to adjust everything to my desires,
but to take each day as it comes, and cherish myself in it.

To "let go" is not to criticize and regulate anybody,
but to try to become what I dream I can be.

To "let go" is not to regret the past, but to grow and to live for the future.

To "let go" is to fear less and to love more.

-Margaret J. Rinck, *Can Christians Love Too Much?*



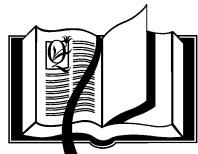
First Communion

Somewhere around the age of 2nd grade, children begin inquiring about the rite of communion. They want to know it's meaning and show interest in communing. We will be offering a First Communion Class on **Saturday, April 4 at 10:00 a.m.** for interested parents and children. You know your child, and so the church believes whenever you feel your child is old enough to learn about the rite of communion and is ready to commune, we are here to support you in this important step. Please let the church office of Pastor Jane know if you are planning to attend.

POT LUCK



Monthly Potluck
will be
**Wednesday,
March 11**
12:00 Noon



Our study continues...

Join us for Bible Study
Tuesdays at 10 a.m.



Attention Coffee Hour Hostesses!

Please check the sign-up sheet on the door in Fellowship Hall.

Hopefully, you can pick a Sunday to provide coffee, juice, maybe some cookies or coffee cakes... whatever you choose!

We would love to have some people from the 11:00 service, as well!

Any questions, call Joann at 815-467-6218.

Thank you so much to those who are already serving!



from THE GREEN TEAM...

Remember to bring your paper for recycling to the bin in the church parking lot. We have also begun recycling empty inkjet cartridges from home computers as well as empty toner cartridges from copy machines. There is a box in the narthex to deposit your empty cartridges, as well as an informational handout. Aside from helping the planet, the church gets \$\$\$ from this program which helps the general fund.



Attention Men of Faith

The Men's Breakfast will be on
Saturday, March 21 from 8-10 a.m.

Sign-up sheets will be in the narthex the preceding Sunday so we can make sure there's enough food for everyone.

Even if you don't sign-up, please join us anyway for good food, fellowship, worship and Bible study.

Be there, and bring a friend!



We will be having a
MINISTRY FAIR
March 22, 9:30-11 a.m.

There will be a clown, treats, prizes and an opportunity for your child to have his/her picture taken with the Easter Bunny!

(Pictures will be available before Easter.)

Several booths and activities will be scattered about Fellowship Hall...

There will be fun for all ages!

You will have the opportunity to see the various ministries of the church and talk with committee chairs and volunteers.

Please bring your entire family!



PRAYER BLANKET MINISTRY

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

-The Serenity Prayer



If you know of someone who you think would like a prayer blanket, or if you would like to participate in this very worthwhile ministry, please contact: Joyce Reed 725-5540, Jackie Marks 467-4094, or Carol Vivic 254-6711.

YOUTH GROUP SCOOP

DYNAMOS

Our 1st thru 4th graders will meet on Thursday, March 26 from 6-7:30 p.m. We will be playing games and enjoying a snack together. I hope to see many of you come out for the fun!

HIGH SCHOOL HAPPENING

Our next meeting is on Sunday, March 11 from noon to 3 p.m. We will try to go bowling. This should cost less than \$20 each for bowling and lunch. Please bring a friend! We will also be deciding on upcoming events. Hope you can make it!

GUPPIES

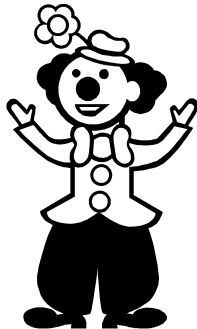
Our preschool and kindergarten youth will meet this month on Saturday, March 28 from 10 a.m. to noon. We will be making crafts, playing games, and enjoying a snack together. We would love to have you join us! Parents are always welcome.

BLAST

Our 5th-8th graders will meet on Saturday, March 28 from 6-9 p.m. We will be enjoying many games and a meal together.

"Souper Bowl of Caring"

On Sunday, February 1, the youth of our congregation sponsored the "Souper Bowl of Caring" project. The group collected donations for the Senior Service Center of Will County. We raised \$205.95. Thank you for your help with this nation-wide service project by supporting this special event!

Attention Sunday School kids!!!
 Come and enjoy the
MINISTRY FAIR
MARCH 22, 9:30-11 a.m.
 Treats! Prizes! Clown!
 Pictures with the Easter Bunny!
 Musical entertainment!
LOTS & LOTS of FUN!

Thanks

A huge thank you goes out to all those who were kind enough to support the youth and come out to our annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser! Also, special thanks to our many youth who did such a wonderful job serving and cooking in the kitchen, and to the many adults who gave so much time and energy to make it all happen.



Please give a Faith Lutheran welcome to our new Administrative Assistant, Vicki Dallmann. An experienced church secretary, Vicki lives in Plainfield with her husband and four children.

The church office is now open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A special **THANK YOU** to Bonnie Badurski, Maggie Koseck, John & Holly Vicki, the Prayer Blanket Ministry, and the Tuesday Bible Study group for assisting with office duties in the interim period.



LENT IS UPON US:

Ash Wednesday Svcs., Feb. 25., 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Simple Soup Suppers, Wednesdays, 6:15 p.m.
Evening Vespers, Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Palm Sunday Services, Sunday, April 5
Day of Fasting, Monday, April 6
Seder Dinner & Worship, Thurs., April 10, 7 p.m.
Good Friday Services, April 10, 7 p.m.
Prayer Vigil, April 10, noon to midnight

2009 Flower and Sanctuary Candle Sign-Up Sheets

Please choose some dates that are significant occasions in your life to share your remembrances and beautify our sanctuary for worship. Let's share our blessings!

ENVELOPES and PLEDGE CARDS

were handed out at church, and those not picked up were mailed. If you have not yet done so, please bring or mail your pledge card back to the church. If you did not receive your envelopes or card, please call the church office.



Life is fragile- handle with prayer...

To start up the Prayer Telephone Machine...
 Call Elsie at 725-4373 or go to www.faithjoliet.com
 and email your prayer requests



Remember our Service Personnel

During times of war it is important to remember our servicemen both in prayer and with cards and letters. Below are listed friends of the congregation who are serving overseas during this time of conflict.

If you have someone to add to our list, please give the following information to the church office or Pastor Jane: name, service

Seaman Megan Dutlinger
 PSC 812 Box 3220
 FPO AE 09627-3200

Donald & Kelli Werner & baby son, Donald
 PSC76 Box 1469
 APO, AE 09720

Robert K Lausch
 CMR 427 Box 725
 APO AEO 9630
 B.D. November 20th

Jonathon Stevens



We are aware of the following members of Faith Lutheran Church having birthdays in March.

GOD BLESS YOU as you recall the day God first gave you life!

If your birthday is omitted or incorrectly recorded, please let us know.

03/02 Amos Finkle
 Heidi Litchfield
 03/03 Bob Peretti
 Samantha Johnson
 03/04 Jeremy Davila
 03/07 Jason Jarosz
 Kelli Werner
 03/09 Greg Goldfuss
 Justin Niswonger

03/13 Angie Pollard
 03/14 Tracy Farr
 Jacqueline Hambrick
 Marteen Bohne
 03/16 Nathan Meyers
 03/17 Vanja Guzman
 Alexa Bowen
 03/23 Marcus Mendelson
 Donald Werner

03/24 Elsie Bowen
 David Hennessey
 03/26 Carl Mendelson
 03/27 Mary Ann Hurstik
 03/28 Ashley Luthanen
 Wanda Dietz
 03/29 Carol Hennessey
 03/31 Jackie Peretti
 Branda Lee Hambrick