

September musings

Luke 12:32

I saw a commercial the other day on TV that caught my attention and made me laugh out loud. Perhaps you've seen it: A dad is in the store with his two children shopping for school supplies. He is excited and joyful about them going back to school, the kids are pained and not at all happy that school is starting. The music playing throughout the commercial is the Christmas carol, "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year."

I remember those days. Those days when I would wake up and check to see if by any chance school had been canceled for the day due to... anything, really. Those mornings of walking out to the end of our driveway to catch the bus in the early morning darkness; those times when the winds whipping off Lake Michigan would bring wind chills of -20 degrees and school still not being canceled. Those days of wishing I could somehow get out of going to school for the rest of my life.

Ironic that I ended up studying to become a High School teacher...

The other day Alannah asked Stacey and me if we would both drive her to school on the first day this year. She's not a worrier, or one that necessarily feels like she 'needs' to have both parents with her on the first day. Rather, she asked because as the new year begins, she wanted to have both her parents with her that morning to mark it as the special day it is. We agreed, and Alannah had the comfort of knowing her mom and dad were behind her, supporting her, and would see her off on her next big adventure as a 2nd grader.

As I thought about it, I realized that to an extent, we never outgrow the need to feel supported, comforted and the presence of loved ones, regardless of the situations we are in.

In Matthew 28, Jesus promises to always be with us. In Hebrews 13 God tells us to keep our lives free from those things that would distract us, and rely on Him: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." In John 14 and 16 we are promised the Holy Spirit who guides and instructs and comforts.

We are not alone. We have the promise of our Triune God that He will always be with us, and lead us in the way He wants us to go, if only we will let Him.

Because that's the other thing about our conversation with Alannah: after Stacey and I said we would be happy to drive her to school, I teased her and said I would also hold her hand and walk into her classroom with her in front of her new teacher and classmates. She got a horrified look on her face and informed me that would not be necessary.

I'm not invited into that part of her life, and I really do understand why (I would have just *died* if my parents had done that to me). I wonder, though, if we do the same to God. Are there parts of our lives we've not invited Him into? What if we did? What would happen?

Yes, school is starting and things are getting back into a regular routine for work, school and all those other things. It's so easy to take all these things in stride and leave God out of them. The challenge for us is to continue in the Word, in Prayer, and walking hand-in-hand with our Father. It

will make those hard days easier, those long nights shorter, and those dreadful days truly like the most wonderful days of the year.

Excited to be on the journey with you,

Pastor Michael

From the Consecrated Stewards Team

“Labor Day thoughts”

In September we observe Labor Day, a legal holiday in honor of labor. The Bible deals with labor in a variety of ways. In Genesis 2:15 we read that **“The Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”** (NIV) It was part of God’s plan of creation to make human beings for work and provide work for them.

Work is important for us. It is important enough that we often answer questions like who or what we are by referring to our work. We may answer in a number of different ways like I’m a teacher, or a plumber, or a carpenter, or an office manager, or a business owner, or a pastor, or a doctor, or one of many other vocations. No wonder people get depressed when they are without jobs and meaningful work to do. Much of our self esteem is tied in closely with our work.

As God’s redeemed stewards we recognize that God has entrusted to us many things to manage and work with according to His will and plan. To not be willing to work and still expect to receive good things is like stealing. Ephesians 4:28 says, **“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.”** (NIV)

Honest labor provides us with a sense of fulfillment and provides for our own needs and something extra to share with others who are in need. The book of Ecclesiastes includes a number of passages like 2:24; 3:12-13; 22; 5:18-20 that encourage us to find joy in our work. Work is a blessing from God and He gives us the time, talent and resources to do our work in a way that honors God and blesses others as well as ourselves. The words of Hebrews 13:20-21 affirm this truth: **“May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”** (NIV)

So this September as many things like vacations are over and new things start up again—school, mission and ministry efforts in our congregations as well as other September activities—let’s remember that with the power of the Holy Spirit we can live and work as God’s redeemed stewards who freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for His purposes. May we always be encouraged to give our very best when it comes to our financial gifts of love, our use of time and talents, and our willing service at home, in the workplace, in our communities and in our congregations.

LCC HAPPENINGS

Here we are – the start of “Rally month” - a little different concept this year. With all that will be starting up now that September is upon us, the activities and happenings will occur over a couple Sundays, thus Rally month. The activities for August included...

- **Jill Chiarelli coordinating Mainspring** on August 8th. Again, thanks to all the cooks who continue to support this ministry. We continue to feed a large number of people!
- **Outdoor worship on Sunday, August 30th!** We tried yet again, but the weather did not cooperate! While it was not raining on Sunday, it was so damp from all the rain the previous day that we held the service indoors. Maybe next year...
- **Scrip orders for September** were taken on August 30th, a week earlier than usual. The normal order date is the first Sunday of each month, but was moved up a week to accommodate Labor Day weekend. All is not lost if you did not get a chance to place an order. Gift cards can be purchased each week “on demand”, based on availability!
- **Thursday evening summer services** ended on August 28th.

SEPTEMBER AND BEYOND

Mainspring, on September 12th, is being coordinated by **Kyle McGivney**. The sign-up and recipe for the month (chicken casserole with stuffing) is posted on the bulletin board. We can still use more cooks!

The flower chart needs some attention. Many thanks to all of you who took care of the summer months. However, about half of the Sundays for the rest of the year are open. Sign-up is on the bulletin board.

Puppets of the Cross practice starts on Thursday, September 10th at 6:00 PM. Children entering 1st grade and older are invited to attend. The first practice will be to rehearse a few of the songs from Vacation Bible School which will be presented during the service on September 13th!

Rally Sunday, Part 1. Mark your calendar for September 13th!! Sunday school and Adult discussion will start, after the worship service at 10:30 AM. Additionally, invitations have gone out to all who attended VBS 2009 to join us for worship this Sunday. Puppets of the Cross will be presenting a few of the songs from “Discovery Canyon”. The adult discussion on the 13th will begin a series examining the differences between the three major Lutheran denomination bodies - the ELCA, the LC-MS and the WELS. On the 13th we'll be answering the question, "How did we get these different bodies to begin with?"

Rally Sunday, Part 2. On September 20th, we will have our installation of officers and new members.

The Picnic at the Parsonage will also be held on September 20th following Sunday School and Adult forum, at approximately 12:00 PM. The Stahls will be providing brats AND **sauerkraut**.

The rest of the meal; appetizers, salads, desserts, is potluck. A sign-up is on the bulletin board to get an idea of numbers...

The women's Bible Study begins Monday, September 14th from 7:15 PM to 8:15 PM. The book being read and discussed is "*Having a Mary Spirit*" by Joanna Weaver. This book, plus the others planned for later in the year are available to be purchased (I think a few are still available). If not, Stacey Stahl has the information on how and where to purchase the book!

Men's monthly breakfasts and Bible Study are starting on Saturday, September 12th at 7:30 AM. All men, including recent confirmands, are invited to attend (I hear the breakfast is REALLY good!)

President Keurulainen will be joining us on Tuesday evening, September 29th at 7:00 PM for coffee, dessert and questions. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend!

Adult Choir is starting. The first rehearsal is Thursday, September 10th at 7:00 PM. All are invited – just show up!!

Our Student Ministry is Starting Again. Lea Bouchard is looking for addresses of all our students away from home. Care packages will be going out periodically – the first scheduled for October 5th. Please contact Lea with addresses and/or if you would like to help at wimaja@aol.com.

Women of the Cross – The Sweet Life Café fall retreat is Oct. 16-18 at Hope Floats Retreat Center in Kingston. The cost is \$60 and includes 2 nights accommodation, meals and retreat supplies. Please sign-up on the bulletin board and give Lea Bouchard a \$20 deposit or the full \$60

Funeral Planning, Saturday, September 19th! This is something none of us want to think about, but can save our loved ones much stress when the time comes... A tentative date and time (10:30 AM) has been set with a funeral home to go through all the issues that must be decided when arranging a funeral. Watch next week's bulletin for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities

The strength of our church has always been largely due to the commitment of our members. It is important that we all continue to help and volunteer, which is even more important as we help support a new pastor. There are many ways each of us can choose to help. Below are just a few...

Hanover Habitat for Humanity – The Hanover Habitat for Humanity just started work on the house being built in Hanover. However, the project is now on hold due to budget issues, but hopefully will be starting up soon.

- Stacey Stahl and Kyle McGivney have volunteered to coordinate food. We will be supplying lunch every sixth week once building gets going. A sign-up is on the bulletin board for people to volunteer for food detail. Please sign-up and include phone number and

email address so that they have the means to contact you when it is our turn. If you would like to help this month, please see Stacey or Kyle.

- LCC Habitat Volunteer Coordinator needed: Please contact Nick Iovino (volunteer@sshabitat.org or 781-843-9080 x18) if you would be willing to coordinate volunteer workers on behalf of our church. Also, please let our office know (781-826-5121) if you volunteer for this position so that we don't keep asking...

Mainspring – We supply meals to Mainspring on the 2nd Saturday of each month. A menu is usually posted around the first of the month and we can always use a few more cooks and bakers. The last few months we have been feeding close to 100! We have coordinators for the rest of this year, so please watch the bulletin board each month for the menu and sign-up. Kyle McGivney is doing the lion's share of the work, so it would be great to find a few more people to help him coordinate the meals in 2010!

Remember the Hanover Food Pantry, the shelves are bare right now! At this point, all things are needed; paper products, soaps, pasta, juices, snacks – you name it! **Please help out!!!** And many thanks to all of you who have made contributions over the last few weeks.

Coffee Hours – This year we need people to supplement the confirmation families in hosting the weekly coffee hour after church. A sign-up is on the bulletin board for volunteers to help out! It has been a rather quiet summer, with many Sundays coffeeless... Hopefully there will be some sign-ups for the fall. Thank you for all your help!!

Worship assistants – **We are in desperate need** of more worship assistants, particularly **counters and for Altar Guild**. We could also use a few more **communion assistants**. The requirement for the latter is being or having been a current or past church council member. We are working on an instruction session in September for those interested in Altar Guild, and for counters as well if need be. Please call Kathy in the office, 781-826-5121, if you would be willing to help with one of these groups.

Personal Mention

- **Happy Birthday wishes in September** are extended to **Sean Brazel, Tommy Chiarelli, Keith Clyde, K. C. Clyde, Ian Darcy, Heidi Donahoe, Satu Donahoe, Carla Errichiello-Hill, John Freeman, Barbara Gorichs, Jean Henderson, Christian Koertje, Jeanne Lane, Evelyn Obreza and Bill Sweetser.**
- **Happy Anniversary to Pastor Chris and Heather Files!**
- **Congratulations to Lori and Troy Prehar on the birth of their daughter, Gracelyn Judith on August 5th.**
- **Congratulations also to great grandmother, Dottie Hayes, and grandmother, Chris Pineo,** on the birth of Tyler to Stephanie and Tyler Caine. Tyler weighed in at 9 lbs. on July 29th.

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I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW A BENEVOLENT GOD
CAN LET BACK-TO-SCHOOL HAPPEN TO GOOD
PEOPLE

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PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...



- Rob Hendrickson**, for continued health and healing
- Carla Errichiello-Hill**, for continued health and healing
- Don Koelsch**, recovering from surgery
- Audrey Yeingst**, undergoing treatment for cancer of the liver and bile duct
- Agnes Abrahamson**, undergoing cancer treatments
- Robin**, Jerry and Barbara Gorichs' daughter, for health and healing
- Brett Orrall**, for continued health and growth
- Marilyn Antonellis**, recovering from surgery
- Jodi Gries**, Jerry and Barbara Gorichs' daughter, recovering from cancer surgery
- Harrison Collett**, 6 yr. old brother of one of our Nursery School students, diagnosed with bone cancer
- Bill and Harriet Williamson**, for health and healing
- Lloyd Prestridge**, Dan Prestridge's father, living with cancer
- Bella and Brayden Orrall**, for continued health and growth.
- Anna Fitzgerald**, Agnes Abrahamson's granddaughter, dealing with epilepsy and autism
- Ethan Darcy**, for continued healing related to his congenital heart defect
- Joyce Linde**, for health and healing
- Marie Bain**, for good health
- Eva Churchhill**, the Hendricksons' friend, for healing from multiple health issues
- Jerry Haley**, friend of the Sweetsers, diagnosed with a brain tumor
- Ministry to the Persecuted Church:**

On Aug. 11, 80 Christians were attacked by Hindu extremists while attending a training camp for teachers. Extremists accused the Christians of being involved in forcible conversion. They confiscated cell phones, Bibles and assaulted the pastors. One pastor escaped and sought help from the police. Police arrived on the scene but, according to media reports, they watched as Bibles were collected and burned. Eight pastors were arrested later and charged with unlawful assembly, rioting, criminal conspiracy and "acts intended to outrage religious feelings by insulting religion or religious beliefs." The names and addresses of the other Christians were recorded by police before they were sent home. The detained pastors were released on bail on Aug. 18.

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The Four Keys to Discovering the “Good Life”

By Jim Burns, Ph.D.

Recently, I had the privilege of speaking with Chuck Colson, who has written a new book, The Good Life: Seeking Purpose, Meaning and Truth in Your Life. We spoke about the paradoxes involved in living the “good life.” They are paradoxes because so often, the pursuit of money, sex and power are the American ideal of “the good life.” Others believe “living the good life” means living for ourselves. Yet, none of these ways of living ultimately satisfies. Following, you’ll find Colson’s “Four Keys to Discovering the Good Life.”

1. Out of Suffering and Defeat Often Comes Victory. The good life is often forged in the crucible of some difficult situation or circumstance, rather than in fortune or fame. The important thing is not what happens to us in life; what matters is how we *respond* to what happens to us. Adversity is a given in life. It will either destroy you or make you. Your response determines all of the difference. How many times have we heard a story that started out with something tragic – but God chose to do a great work out of the tragedy. This is an important lesson our kids need to learn before they reach adulthood.

2. We Have to Lose Our Lives to Save Them. That’s Jesus talking now (see Matthew 16:25)! The tighter we try to hold on to who we think we are, the faster our lives and opportunities start slipping away. Losing our lives means getting ourselves out of the way. Then, we can discover a new identity with others – and a new understanding of who we really are. So, let God be God in your life and you’ll experience abundant joy. Galatians 2:20 reads, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,

who loved me and give himself for me.” Dying to self so that we might truly live is another important lesson to teach teens and pre-teens.

3. Freedom Lies Not in Conforming to the World’s Expectations – It Lies in Following the Calling on Our Lives. Each of us is called to some work, and our ultimate joy and fulfillment – and freedom – come by our obedience to that mission. God has shaped us uniquely and intentionally, and we blossom to become all God created us to be when we are obedient to God’s calling on our lives. Still, this concept can be tricky to work through because sometimes we’ll think we hear God calling us to do something – but it turns out to be our own selfish desires. Examine your giftedness and your passions. Listen carefully for the “still, small voice” of the Holy Spirit. You’ll hear it soon enough!

4. We Have to Understand the Evil in Ourselves Before We Can Truly Embrace the “Good Life.” Until we understand our propensity to do wrong, we never achieve the ability to do the right thing. We’re talking morals and values here. It’s tough because our culture seems to have rejected any objective concept of right and wrong. But, this is the pivot point of our faith. In this self-centered, sin and sex-saturated society of ours, while it might seem impossible for our kids to “get it,” I encourage you to stay the course!

(Adapted from the book, The Good Life: Seeking Purpose, Meaning and Truth in Your Life by Chuck Colson and Harold Fickett)

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ADOPT AN EXPENSE PROGRAM

(January – December 2009)

Below is the list of “Adopt-An-Expense” program items for 2009, so far. As mentioned at the January congregational meeting, the **goal is to get \$1,600 of adopted expenses by the end of the year. We are almost three-quarters of the way there!** Does this mean we can beat the goal??? Many thanks to Cory and Don Burroughs, Gudrun Davis, Carla and Ernie Hill, Jackie Johnson, Patty Owen and the 4th-6th grade Sunday School, and Audrey and Ray Yeingst for their contributions. Please remember that you can adopt a portion of any expense. Every little bit helps!!!

<u>Item</u>	<u>Approx. cost</u>	<u>Remain. Amt</u>	<u>Adopted</u> (this year)
2009 Expenses			
Sunday School Supplies			
Fall material	380.00	240.00	140.00
Winter material	380.00	380.00	
Spring material	380.00	380.00	
VBS Supplies	1000.00	1000.00	
Offering envelopes	500.00	500.00	
Disposable Communion Cups	110.00	0.00	110.00
Portals of Prayer	160.00	160.00	
Confirmation Scarves	40.00	40.00	

Certificates (Baptism, 1 st communion...)	60.00	60.00	
Altar Candles	500.00	500.00	
Eternal Candles	125.00	125.00	
Calendars	30.00	30.00	
Communion cruet	94.00	0.00	94.00
Holy Week bulletin covers	90.00	90.00	
Pastors' wives conference	90.00	0.00	90.00
Financial Secretary expenses	280.40	0.00	280.40
Puppet Ministry			
Deluxe Puppet Pack	116.00	0.00	116.00
6 Inbetweens	144.00	39.00	105.00
6 Full/Half Body Puppets	240.00	40.00	200.00
Stage Materials/Props	300.00	300.00	
TOTAL ADOPTED:			\$1,135.40