

MARCH 2015

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH



Dear Friends in Christ,

I was going to write a great introduction to this story, but after several tries I decided to simply let the story speak for itself. It is from one of the books I try to read once a year: *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of Childlike Faith* by Mike Yaconelli.

“Karla and I spent a week at the Daybreak Retreat Center. We were soul weary. We had come to the point where our busy lives were ‘putting our souls in danger.’ Desperate for our souls to be mended, we gathered in the bitter December cold for our first meeting. We had come with a group of our friends and were anxious to meet Henri Nouwen and Sue Mosteller, the leaders of our retreat. The first meeting brought together our group of eight, three workers from L’Arche, and three mentally and/or physically challenged residents of the community. I had read many of Henri Nouwen’s books and fully expected his remarks at our first meeting to be life changing. Despite the obligatory introductions, I had admitted to the group that my busyness was draining my soul of life – leaving it lifeless and weak. Although Henri’s opening remarks were interesting, I was disappointed. I expected profound insights. What I received was logistical instructions for the week.

After the meeting, somewhat dismayed, I was confronted by a handsome resident of L’Arche. I’ll call him Robert. Robert was in his forties and although his appearance was normal, his vocabulary wasn’t – it was limited to maybe a few hundred words. He stood uncomfortably close, his face inches from mine. With his eyes focused directly on mine he said, ‘Busy?’

Startled with his concise memory of what I had said earlier, I said patronizingly, ‘Yes, Robert, I’m very busy.’

‘*Too busy?*’ he continued.

‘Yes Robert,’ I admitted rather sheepishly, ‘I’m too busy.’

I will never forget what happened next. He moved even closer (his eyes revealing his sadness for me) and asked with a sincerity I have seldom experienced, ‘*Why?*’

My eyes filled with tears. Robert, a man with a very limited vocabulary, had asked the one question I had been afraid to ask. Somehow he knew the solution to my weariness was hidden somewhere in the answer to his question – a question I was afraid to ask and no one else had. Why was I so busy? Because I was still hanging on to the belief that God’s affection for me was measured by my activity for him. The more things I did for God, the more He would love me, or so my insecurities kept telling me. Robert, in his childlike way, could see my insecurity, could feel my need to prove to God I was worth loving. By asking me a simple question, Robert started me on a journey with intimacy with my Father. Amazingly, Robert’s risky curiosity peered deep into my soul enabling me to begin hearing what God had been spending my life-time trying to say to me: ‘I love you, Mike, questions and all, with an unconditional, no-strings-attached love.’”

What of our busyness? Are we trying to win the love of our spouse, our children, our co-workers, our friends, our neighbors, or ourselves? Are we trying to prove how much we are worth and that we really do have a meaning and purpose in life? Are you too busy? WHY? I don’t like to think about this, but I know I must. The reality is that none of us has anything to prove. We are loved, we are important, and we have meaning – the Cross and the Empty Tomb are all the proof we need. Too busy? Why?

Yours in Christ

Pastor Randy

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COUNTIL MINUTES

Presentation by Kathy Gensel on volunteering opportunities through JustServe.org a volunteer service in which volunteers are linked with opportunities to serve. She also shared about “People Promoting Wellness through Community Action (PPWCA) a group of community members and organizations working together to advance well-being by connecting people and resources in the community for positive life span development.”

Old Business:

- Hardware for the nursery door is in and the blinds are all installed.
- Sign committee update.
- Picture directory update: a number of photos have been received digitally and the process to review and edit the directory is under way.
- Annual meeting minutes review- John C. and Jon L. reviewed the minutes and approved them.
- CLC Wedding policy – Keith reviewed the motion before the Council concerning the wedding policy. The council discussed the policy and decided to table the motion until the next meeting.

New Business:

- Discussed the Congregational Councils Leadership workshop. At this time there wasn’t any interest from the council in attending.
- Discussed the Synod Assembly that will take place in Wasilla in April.
- Denise made a motion that the Council provide Randy a month of spiritual renewal to be used at his discretion with an allowance of five thousand dollars in addition to his normal compensations. All were in favor. Motion passed.
- Due to Spring Break, the March Council meeting was changed to March 19, 2015.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

www.JustServe.org links volunteers with projects and projects with volunteers. For you individually, the first thing to do is to register at www.justserve.org. You can put in your contact information and as volunteer opportunities come up in your area you will be sent an email notifying you of that. If you see something you would like to volunteer for, you go to that project and click on Volunteer and it will give you information on that project. If a group has a project that they would like to have entered onto the JustServe.org site to gather volunteers then just contact Kathy Gensel at 262-9263 or dlgensel@ptialaska.net and she will set up your project on the website. This www.JustServe.org website is just one of many tools that are available to put volunteers and projects together. For questions, contact Kathy.



EASTER BREAKFAST

There will be a breakfast Easter Sunday (April 5) at 9:30 AM. Please bring rolls, hot cross buns, zucchini bread, date bread, etc. to share and we will provide the rest. If you have any questions you can call Aleja DeVito (262-8326), Ken Harper (283-3929) or Pastor Randy.

Easter Breakfast



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday/Lenten Fair: Sunday, March 29.

The Annual Lenten Fair will be held from 9:30-10:40.

This is a time for youth and adults of all ages to gather together to have a lot of fun as we make crafts, share a few snacks, put together birthday bags, and just enjoy one another's company. Following the Lenten Fair we will have a festive worship service with palm fronds.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

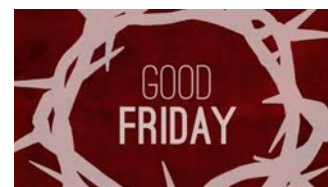
Maundy Thursday: Thursday, April 2

We will participate in a joint worship service at Soldotna United Methodist Church highlighted by a Living Lord's Supper. The service will be at 7:00 PM as we celebrate the day when Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion and reminded us that as his followers we are to serve rather than to be served.



Good Friday: Friday, April 3

There will be a tenebrae service of darkness at 7:00 PM as we remember our Lord's suffering and death. Scripture, dramatic readings, hymns, special music, the bell choir, and prayers will help us remember Jesus' sacrifice for us.



Easter: Sunday, April 5

Join us as celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior. We will begin with breakfast at 9:30 AM followed by worship at 11:00. We will celebrate this special day with the Sacrament of Holy Communion, special music from the bell choir, hymns, scripture, balloons, and more. Bring a friend as we celebrate the most important day in our faith as we shout out with Christians everywhere, "He is risen indeed!" There will be NO 6:00 PM Songs and Celebrations on Easter.



CROCHETING THEIR WAY MINISTRY

We are collecting yarn for women at Wildwood Prison who are crocheting articles for people in the community. There is a box outside of Randy's office for your donations.



COMMUNION DATES

11:00 AM Service, 1st and 3rd Sunday, March 1st and 15th
6:00 PM Service, 2nd and 4th Sunday, March 8th and 22nd

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Thank you for your generous donations to the Souper Bowl of Caring on February 1st. We received \$2,015 for Feed My Starving Children. This organization was founded in 1987 and is a Christian non-profit that provides nutritionally complete meals for starving, malnourished and hungry people in 70 countries. The prepackaged meals – costing less than a quarter to make – are funded and assembled by donor volunteers in the United States. Their in-country partners use the food to prevent starvation and curb malnourishment in children and families worldwide. Your gifts will provide more than 8060 meals!



REMEMBER IN PRAYERS

Healing for: Healing for Katie MacLeod, Roger Pearson, Ted Johnson's Uncle Chuck; K Dean's son-in-law's mom who had a stroke; Marsy's dad with back pain and other problems; Sandee Simon's friend with genetic problems; Katie MacLeod's lung problems; Katie MacLeod's niece's husband, John, needs liver transplant; Dennis Bible's cousin's granddaughter, Emily, recovering from an automobile accident; Stephanie Bouchard who is dealing with lupus; Darnell Schneider - dealing with health problems-wisdom for her doctors.

Continued prayer for those with cancer: Kevin Rainey heading to Mexico for treatment; JoAnn's friend, Marilyn; Natasha's friend, Charlene, who has liver cancer; Bill Connel whose cancer has returned; Ron Martinson whose cancer has returned; Ted Kreger with a rare form of cancer; Kathy Gensel's friend with breast cancer; Norma Forbs and her husband both battling cancer; Marlene Pearson's friend in Anchorage undergoing treatment; Sue Bigg's friend, Jerry; Jon and JoAnn Hagen-Lillevik's friend undergoing treatment in Minnesota; Alex Nisler's uncle; Lana Syverson's brother-in-law; Sandy Knutson; Deanne Pearson's friend in Seattle and her sister with breast cancer; Hannah Thompson's friend; Scott Cunningham's mother; Dee Richard's brother, Bob; Leslie Virelli; Barb Norbeck's friend; Polly Crawford undergoing treatment for cancer of the spine; Katie MacLeod's nephew, Joe Auld; Michael Hollinger's mom; John Brewer's brother, Glenn; Dee Richards five year old grand niece undergoing leukemia treatments; Rochelle Schneider's son-in-law, Tom; Dick Evenson undergoing chemotherapy.

Strength for: and guidance for Marlene Pearson's friend in dire circumstances; Renee Henderson's and JoAnn Hagen's friend undergoing radiation treatment; Betty Wittenberg's father dealing with Parkinson's; Robin Castleman's brother suffering from depression; Jeanna Carver's niece dealing with anorexia; Marlene Pearson's son, Mark, who has ALS.

Prayers for: Gene McCleefe prayers for surgery; wisdom for the doctors trying to figure out the cause of Blaine Carver headaches; Dee Richards who broke her ankle; Robin Castleman's niece's twins, Patrick and Andrew who are now home; peace in Somalia, Israel, Palestine; Nigeria, Middle East, Syria and Ukraine; safety for those in the military; protection for Jamie Willard's husband in Afghanistan; Synod Prayer Partner - Dillingham Lutheran; wisdom for the leaders of our country and world; the unemployed.

Thanksgiving for: prayers for Olga's mother; continued improvement for Dan Houglum.

Comfort for: the family Renee Henderson's friend, Maria, who suffered two aneurysms and passed away; the family of Ryan Hakkinen who passed away; the family and friends of Roger Schmidt who passed away; the Weaver family struggling with the death of their son; children around the world who are in orphanages; those suffering from depression.

Guidance for: our church as we work through (same-sex) wedding policies.

LENT

We are in the Lenten season. During Lent we are having midweek Lenten services on Wednesday morning at 11:00 AM and in the evening at 6:00 PM.

This year, our midweek services are "The Power of His Last Words" and focus on the last words of Jesus as he hung on the cross. Each week a different character responds to one of Jesus' words. We will hear from Zacchaeus, John, Leah, Martha, the Samaritan Woman at the Well, and Nicodemus.

There will also be a number of Lenten devotional materials in the entryway to help you with your prayer and devotional life as you make your Lenten journey this year.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



The Women's Bible study meets Fridays at 9:30 AM
They are using "The Story: The Bible as One Continuing Story
of God and His People." If you have any questions
please contact Mandy Pieh at 260-9559 or Twyla Mundy at 252-1510.

LUNCH BUNCH - CALLING ALL LADIES!!!!

Ladies: The Lunch Bunch will meet Tuesday, March 10th at 11:30 AM
at Gingers in the Peninsula Center Mall.

BROTHER FRANCIS SHELTER

Winter is here. When you are homeless life on the street can be harsh, and the colder it gets the more harsh it can become. New, clean and lightly used winter gear and clothing including shoes, boots, hats, scarves, socks, etc. continue to be collected. Handmade items are appreciated. Drop off items at the church and they will be delivered to one of the homeless outreach agencies. Contact Sandy 262-7460 or sandyalaska@gmail.com for more information.



FOOD PANTRY



Food
Pantry
Ministry

The Food Pantry is a joint project of Soldotna United Methodist Church and Christ Lutheran Church. Additional support comes from generous individuals, organizations, local businesses, as well as help from the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank.

For the first three weeks of February a total of 81 boxes were distributed serving 154 adults and 81 children. The pantry is open Wednesday from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Bagging begins Wednesdays at 10:00 AM and you are welcome to come for an hour or for the afternoon. Peanut butter, cereal, canned fruit, canned entrees like chili, ravioli, pork and beans, etc. are always needed. If you are shopping and wish to buy extra food for the pantry, please drop it by the church and we will get it to the pantry. Small bottles of shampoo, bars of soap, tooth paste, etc. are also needed. Of course, money is always appreciated. There is a donation container on the table for your gifts. If you wish to help with the staffing any Wednesday (10:00 AM to 2:00 PM), please call Cosette at 262-7610.



BIRTHDAY BAGS

Can you imagine a birthday without a cake or candles? How about a birthday with no presents? Not many of us can, yet there are many in our community for who this is a reality. The 6th-9th grade faith formation class will once again be preparing birthday bags for the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank. They will be collecting items for the bags. If you are interested in donating any items they can be dropped off on the table in the entryway. Cake mixes, frosting balloons, candles, and birthday gift bags are needed. Cash donations are also accepted and the shopping will be done for you. The donation can is on the table in the entryway.





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Christ Lutheran Mission Statement:

Knowing Christ

Empowering His Followers

Making Him Known To Others

Please Call Us ... 262-4757

We want to include you in our prayers, arrange for pastoral visits, and announce information to the congregation, when appropriate. Please notify the church office as soon as possible when:

- A member of your family or someone you know dies.
- You or someone you know is ill or grieving.
- You or someone you know is in the hospital.
- You or someone you know wants to plan a baptism, wedding or celebration.
- You move or change telephone numbers.