



The Grapevine

A Monthly Newsletter For The Family And Friends
Of Faith Lutheran Church Of Sonoma Valley

—Volume 2, Summer 2009 Issue—
August/September

PROPER PRUNING

“I am the true vine and my father is the gardener” John 15:1

Fellow Gardeners:

Many years ago I was called to an emergency at the home of one of our church families. When I knocked no one came to the door. There was only a shout, “Come in.” I did, and was greeted by a horrible sight. The mother was holding her child while the father was slapping the little girl’s face. Not so hard as to leave any bruises, mind you, but hard enough that I winced. Along with the slapping, they kept shouting at their little girl and every once in a while they gave her a painful pinch. Child abuse? Even though I thought I knew this devout and faithful family, I thought I was in the presence of genuine child abuse.

As it happens, it wasn’t child abuse at all. Thinking they were candy, the little one had swallowed a mouthful of prescription medication...enough to potentially end her life. “Until the ambulance arrives,” the parents had been told, “keep her awake. Do whatever is necessary to keep her awake.” The picture of horror was transformed immediately into an exhibition of love. Not to hurt, but to save, was the motivation of the parents. This is God’s motivation in your life, and mine as well. Sooner or later we will all feel the slap and pinch of our heavenly Father. Please know, and it is absolutely certain, God loves you and what you are experiencing is done to get your attention...to keep you awake...and prepare you for God’s remedy in your life.

Those who are not yet part of God’s baptized household of faith are not fully aware that they are not smart enough, strong enough, fast enough, or holy enough to meet the Lord on their own. In His very special love, God wants those who do not yet believe to have a living connection with Christ and His death and His resurrection. If God’s pruning is hurting, very often it is to capture an unbeliever’s attention and make him vulnerable to the good news of the Gospel. Sometimes pain and tragedy are God’s veiled hands reaching out for ultimate rescue.

If you are reading these words, the probability is high that you are part of God’s baptized household of faith. You know that Christ has borne and taken away your sins. You may be especially perplexed as to why God is pruning you? “Why do bad things happen to good people—or a good person—like me?”

Let me ask you, have you ever taken your child to the doctor for a shot? Did you do so because you hated your child? Of course not! You did what you did out of love and care. Your child saw pain; you saw healing purpose. Now if we parents act for our children’s best interest, can we doubt that

our loving Father would do any less for us? Our merciful Father, who cares for us and who sent His son to save us will always do what is best for His children. In love, He will always do what needs to be done.

In a moment of crisis, we are brought to our knees in repentance, and our hearts and minds are opened up to His Holy Spirit's wisdom in ways that would simply not be the case when life presents us with "business as usual." See in your momentary pain the promise of God's healing and an ever deeper living relationship to Him through Christ in the Holy Spirit's power.

With Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Tom" with a stylized flourish underneath.

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

Summertime

What does summer mean to you? Vacation, relaxation, gardening, fun times with family and friends.....the list goes on and on. Many poets and composers have written about summer's gifts. The first lines of Robert Louis Stevenson's poem The Summer Sun Shone Round Me read:

The summer sun shone round me,
The folded valley lay
In a stream of sun odour,
That sultry summer day...

Stevenson spent time in Sonoma and Napa. Perhaps he was reflecting on our beautiful valley when he wrote this poem. It's worth the research and reading the poem in its entirety.

For those who prefer cool weather, this has been "your summer," although we were teased with some scorching days in early summer. What will fall bring? Worship attendance always dips July – August, but we were blessed with the church richly attended these summer months. What a treat to meet and greet visitors, family members and friends.

There are many summer vacation stories to be told. One group with a great story is our youth group. In July, John Casciani, with the help of Sharon Forrest, traveled to Beaumont, Texas with five teenagers to assist homeowners with hurricane relief. John is busy preparing a video presentation to share with us one Sunday. Thank you, John, Sharon, Annick Adams, Emily Garbarino, Alyssa McDougle, Ellen Morton, and Meagan Harper for devoting part of your vacation time in service to others. You are an inspiration to all.

As fall approaches, it's time to refocus on the mission and tasks of the church. It will soon be time to appoint a nominating committee to fill upcoming vacancies on the Church Council. A complete list of positions available will be published in the next Grapevine. Anyone wishing to offer his/her time and talents should contact the nominating committee (when appointed) to be added to the list for consideration.

Summer's not over yet. Don't let it slip away without taking opportunities to enjoy all it has to offer.

In love and service,
Cheryl Casciani

A NEW ORGAN FOR FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH When a project is our timing instead of God's, it's amazing how difficult, how time-consuming, and how many problems can interfere with a desired outcome. When the timing is God's, just the opposite takes place...how smoothly everything happens and how completely the outcome is experienced.

Apparently it was in God's good timing for God's people at Faith Lutheran Church to enjoy the accompaniment of an organ to our worship life. One of our member families did research on their own and presented the possibility to Pastor Tom with the potential contribution of the first \$10,000 to the project. Our Church Council then authorized an organ committee to be formed to hear various installations and to come back for a report. The Board of Worship and the Board of Elders were both kept informed as to the progress. The Council authorized that an "Organ Sunday" be planned for Sunday, July 26th where a demonstration installation could be set up in our church over a weekend so that our congregation could experience a "typical Sunday" with the use of an organ at the expert hands of our Worship Accompanist, **Mark Rasmussen**. A potluck luncheon was scheduled following that service with the first of two General Assemblies to be held after the luncheon. The General Assembly on July 26th was for information only. Attitudes, questions and comments were all entertained with responses provided.

The following Sunday, August 2nd, the second General Assembly called by the Church Council was for the express purpose of deciding whether or not to purchase the Ahlborn-Galanti organ. Ahlborn-Galanti organs are manufactured in Italy with a distribution center in Chicago, Illinois. After additional comments and questions, a secret ballot was taken resulting in **47 people voting yes**, and **2 people voting no**.

Based upon our experience with "Organ Sunday," it was discovered that additional speaker units will be required in the choir area at the back of the church to fully involve the congregation and choir in the worship. With the needed additional equipment, the cost of this installation for Faith Lutheran Church will be just a bit over \$16,000 (a remarkable price for the sophisticated equipment purchased).

It is our pleasure to announce to all of our readers that by the end of that second voter's meeting, the organ (with the cost of the additional equipment required) was fully funded!!! The contract has been signed by the President of our congregation, and the installation will take place some time during the second half of the month of September. We express our profound appreciation to all of our donors and to those folks who many years ago began the original "organ fund." (The monies remaining in that fund, dormant for many years, were added to the resources which enabled us to refurbish our sanctuary with beautiful new liturgical appointments.)

WOMEN AT FAITH—SAVE THE DATE Women's Bible Study Fellowship will hold its annual fall potluck luncheon on Saturday, September 5th, at 12:00 noon. Please bring a salad to share. Also, remember to bring your mite box. If you need a ride, call **Judy Hill** at 935-7441 or **Shirley Engelman** at 933-8069.

SOARING ON THE WINGS OF AN EAGLE Throughout history, four symbols captured the totality of human authority: a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. The early Christian church took these four symbols and discovered in each the unique character of the four Gospels. A winged man became the symbol for the Gospel of Matthew; the winged lion for the Gospel of Mark; the winged ox the symbol of Luke; the soaring eagle for the Gospel of John...which does take the human heart and bear it aloft in soaring inspiration. **Our Thursday evening Bible class community resumes on Thursday, September 24th at 6:30 PM in Goehring Hall with Pastor Tom.** We begin a major new study...the Gospel of John. Be ready to let the Holy Spirit make your spirits soar!

YOUTH MISSION DAY CELEBRATION PLANNED for August 23rd, with a potluck luncheon immediately after the Sunday morning service in Goehring Hall. The purpose of this luncheon is two-fold. To honor our young people newly returned from their summer mission activities, and to provide an opportunity for all of us to hear of their experiences and see lots of pictures that have captured them for us. John Casciani and Sharon Forrest accompanied our young people from July 19th through the 25th. They flew to Houston, Texas and from there drove to Port Arthur, TX. There, our young people joined up with group work camps who met at Trinity Lutheran Church of Port Arthur. From there they worked in three small towns: Bridge City, Beaumont, and Winnie, respectively. They joined other youth in cleaning debris and reconstructing homes severely damaged in recent hurricane activity. In the process they learned all about sheet rock, insulation, electrical connections, and so forth. **Be sure to join us on the 23rd of August to hear all about their experiences and express your appreciation to them for representing all of us in this very special way.**

CHURCH STEEPLE REPAIR Over the past couple of weeks, our tower and steeple has been completely restored. It, and the cross above, were in pretty bad shape for a long time and in need of a new coat of paint. **Anderson's Tree Service** used their bucket to remove the cross from the steeple for repairs and maintenance. The owner, Bob Anderson, and his son JP, who operated the bucket, were on hand. Bob had placed the cross up there about 10 or so years ago after the last maintenance job. The cross is made from a 4x4 solid piece of wood. It had copper or brass inlays on the front of the cross that had been painted over. The inlays had fallen out over the years and were not replaced.

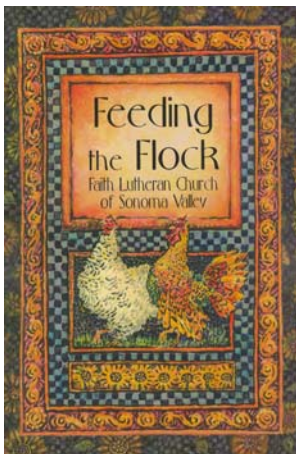


Randy Miller built a new cross from solid piece of 4x4 stock and attached it to the metal frame and wood base that fits over the steeple. The wood base had to be replaced as it had dry rot from years of weather. The birds had also done some damage to the cross. Attached to the new cross are 3" stainless steel spikes. These spikes will deter the birds from perching on the cross. Randy also spent about a week repairing and painting the steeple. He worked off ladders leaned against the steeple about 4 stories in the air—not an easy task. (The picture about says it all!) We are so grateful and thank Randy and Anderson Tree Service for their many hours of hard work. Be sure to look up at the revamped steeple. Unfortunately we need to wait for maintenance on the “bucket” before the cross can be installed. In the meantime, it is temporarily located in the Narthex for all to see. Be sure to visit our web site for more pictures of the project!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA is proud to sponsor "An Evening with Garrison Keillor" live in concert on Tuesday, September 22, at 7:00 P.M, at the Memorial Auditorium in Sacramento. Garrison Keillor is one of the foremost humorists and story-tellers in the U. S. He weekly presents the program "A Prairie Home Companion" on PBS. He delights in making fun of Lutherans which he certainly will do in abundance at Sacramento since the audience will hopefully be packed with Lutherans. Tickets may be purchased on www.tickets.com or at www.sacramentoconventioncenter.com. You can order by phone by calling the box office, 916-808-5181 or contact Lutheran Social Services at 925-825-1060. Please plan to attend this event in support of Lutheran Social Services' fight against homelessness in Northern California. The hope is to organize car pools that will leave from our church parking lot. If you have any questions, please call Pastor Jack Geistlinger at 252-4978.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON BIBLE STUDY, led by Pastor John Marozik, will resume class on the day after Labor Day, Tuesday, September 8, at 1:00 pm. When we return in September, we shall begin reading though the letter of Paul to the Galatians. At issue in this letter is a dispute in the first century of Christianity between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Martin Luther, in the 16th century, relied heavily on this letter in his writings and arguments against the prevailing teaching of the Church of his day. Galatians has sometimes been called the “Magna Carta” of Christian freedom. A key theme verse of this letter is 2:16. Look it up! All are welcome to this every Tuesday class!

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR WEB SITE LATELY? The web committee is proud to announce that our site (flcsv.org) is updated on a regular basis! Most recent additions include current Memorial Garden information, a photo gallery of our beautiful facilities, a designated page featuring the very important people who serve us at Faith, and information and pictures of our steeple repair. The site also includes a monthly calendar of events and the most current Sunday sermons. So if you miss a Sunday, or want to hear the sermon again (!), it's there for you. Get in the habit of visiting flcsv.org on a regular basis 😊 😊



THANK YOU ONE AND ALL—On Sunday, July 26th, prior to a General Assembly meeting, several “in-house chefs” provided a most wonderful lunch featuring recipes from our very own FLC cookbook, “Feeding The Flock!” The luncheon was a great opportunity to sample a variety of fantastic recipes from our *flock*! Wherever possible, recipe titles and page numbers were provided for each contribution. If you missed the day, or missed getting information on a favorite, a list is posted on the Connections Board in Goehring Hall. If yours is missing—let us know!

A very special thanks to **Lucy Musick** for coordinating the event. Also, we must acknowledge the clean-up crew: **Scott Bamford, Henry Hanson, Don and Lucy Musick, Janice Meneken** and, of course, **Bernice Thorstenson**, our *Kitchen Queen*! Future “tastings” will be announced. In the meantime, if you are hosting coffee fellowship and incorporate featured recipes, let us know and we’ll post the information on the Board!

Also remember these cookbooks make great gifts. Several members have purchased numerous copies to pass along to friends and family. If you need additional copies, contact Valerie in the church office 996-7365 or Janice Meneken at 996-1629.

SOCIAL MINISTRY 2009 The Tea was a huge success. Our profits totaled \$2500.00. Adding the \$2300.00 proceeds from the previous year, as well as anticipated profits from the 2010 Tea, we should have enough funds to cover the cost of replacing the flooring in Goehring Hall. Special thanks to Mary Piller who recorded volunteer hours to receive additional funds from Thrivent. For her efforts, we received \$500 (which is included in the above figures).

The **Fourth of July BBQ** was a lot of fun. We had about 60 people in attendance. Everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship. I would like to thank Cheryl Casciani for working with me at the FLC booth on the Plaza and for assisting me in decorating the patio, and to Paulette Miller and Janice Meneken for cleaning-up after the lunch. I think we need to do pot-luck more often, maybe even throw in some Bingo!

Thanks to everyone who purchased copies of our cookbook, **Feeding The Flock**, we are now “in the black,” I’m grateful for the sales efforts of Janice and Lucy during numerous coffee hours; to Janice for keeping on-going sales records; to Lucy for organizing and coordinating the luncheon on “Organ Sunday” which featured recipes from the cookbook. It was a terrific lunch. What would we do without Lucy? She helps with everything and everyone!

The summer reading for our **Book Club** is John Adams by David McCullough. We will meet on Saturday, September 12th at 10:00AM in the Family Life Center for discussion.

God Bless you one and all!
Sandy Thompson



It has pleased Almighty God in His infinite wisdom to call unto Himself the soul of **Mary R. Eickhoff** who died July 21st, 2009 in Sonoma. She was a fifty-six year resident of Sonoma Valley and native of Seboyeta, New Mexico. A graveside service was conducted on Thursday, July 30th at 11:00 in the morning at the Valley Cemetery in Sonoma.

We express our sincere condolence and confidence in the resurrection promise of our Lord Jesus to her son, Alvin, and to the members of the extended family.

Rest eternal, grant to her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her for Jesus' sake. Amen.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS You never know when these might be useful. All calls are free of charge. Isn't that great!

SITUATION

CALL

When in sorrow	John 14
When others fail you	Psalm 27
If you want to be fruitful	John 15
When you have sinned.....	Psalm 51
When you worry	Matthew 6:19-34
When you are in danger.....	Psalm 91
When God seems far away.....	Psalm 139
When your faith needs stirring.....	Hebrews 11
When you are lonely and fearful.....	Psalm 23
When you grow bitter and critical	I Corinthians 13
For Paul's secret to happiness	Colossians 3:12-17
For understanding of Christianity	II Corinthians 5:15-19
When you feel down and out.....	Romans 8:31
When you want peace and rest.....	Matthew 11:25-30
When the world seems bigger than God.....	Psalm 90
When you want Christian assurance.....	Romans 8:1-30
When you leave home for labor or travel	Psalm 121
When your prayers grow narrow or selfish.....	Psalm 67
For a great invention/opportunity.....	Isaiah 55
When you want courage for a task.....	Joshua 1
For how to get along with neighbors	Romans 12
When you think of investments and returns	Mark 10
If you are depressed	Psalm 27
If your pocketbook is empty	Psalm 37
If you are losing confidence in people	I Corinthians 13
If people seem unkind	John 15
If discouraged about your work	Psalm 126
If you find the world growing small and yourself great.....	Psalm 19

Alternate numbers:

For dealing with fear.....	Psalm 34:7
For security	Psalm 121:3
For assurance	Mark 8:35
For reassurance	Psalm 145:18

Emergency numbers may be dialed direct. **No operator assistance is needed!**

