



The Grapevine

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

Volume 2, May 2009
Ascension Issue



IN JERUSALEM...
IN JUDEA...
IN SAMARIA...
TO THE VALLEY OF THE MOON...

Dear Easter People of Faith:

For forty days the Risen Lord was among His disciples in Palestine gladdening their hearts with His presence, teaching them, comforting them, and preparing them for their future. He appeared to a variety of His disciples. In one place more than 500 were gathered, and then just as suddenly as He had risen from the dead on Easter morning, He left them.

Gathered with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, He laid out a simple plan by which people of every race, language and tribe could come under the umbrella of God's new kingdom on earth and in heaven. The disciples were to speak and live the Good News beginning in Jerusalem...and in Judea...moving northward into Samaria and Galilee and ultimately to the ends of the earth...to our beautiful Sonoma Valley, The Valley of the Moon, nestled among the vineyard-covered hills of Northern California.

You may ask why on earth Jesus left His disciples in a lurch when they were just beginning to grasp the implication of His Easter victory. He left them in bodily form so that His "presence" could take on a radical new shape...**the promised gift of his Holy Spirit** would make Him truly present everywhere His Word is proclaimed, his Baptism is embraced, and His Holy Supper is received with repentant believing hearts.

As He ascended on high, His messengers informed the disciples, and you and me, that He will return some day just as they had seen Him leave. His ultimate return will usher in the eternal kingdom for a much wider family who will have had the opportunity to come to know Him, love Him, trust Him, and receive Him fully through the witness of His many servants down through the ages.

May God bless your Easter this year! Remember, Easter is not a Sunday; it is a season...seven weeks in which the sacred story of His rising, His teaching, His preaching, His Baptism and Eucharist unfold before us and touch ultimately every aspect of our personal lives of faith. May God keep you joyful, singing, praying, sharing the Good News, serving one another in need, and working...waiting...watching...for His ultimate arrival in victory to claim you as His own forever.

Christ Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Rosetta Tom
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Youth Group

John Casciani has single-handedly led the youth group for several years. Just when he thinks he might hang up his hat, the kids renew his enthusiasm. Such is the case this year with World Vision's 30-Hour Famine. The youth group has participated in this worthwhile service event for the last four years. He jumped at the opportunity to help Christine Eraldi fulfill her high school senior project. Hours are spent organizing the actual 30-Hour Famine weekend, preparing a presentation to the congregation and raising funds to donate to World Vision to be used to "save kids lives." Christine did more than was necessary to complete her project. She grasped the magnitude of the world epidemic of starvation and food-related deaths. The outpouring of support to World Vision and the teens' efforts on Sunday, April 19 was overwhelming and heartwarming. The bake sale raised over \$1,200! How could anyone not be moved by learning that 26,000 children die "EACH DAY" of starvation?

Our Church Council has discussed the concern for the low number of children in our congregation. Through John's hard work and dedication, at times he has 16 teens in the youth group, and only three of them are from our congregation. What exactly are we to make of this? The kids who attend youth group are interested in broadening their horizons. As a result, in addition to holding weekly Bible study for the group, John helps the kids understand how to apply what they learn to their lives, that "they" can "make a difference" in the world, and anything is possible. He has taught them that there is more to being a Christian than participating in the youth group or attending church services and to put their faith into actions. The youth has embraced this concept and they in turn want, we, adults to embrace it as well. Aren't teenagers supposed to be self-centered and too wrapped up in what is fun to be bothered helping others? Not with this group. In addition to committing one weekend each year to the 30-Hour Famine, they give up part of their summer vacation to do manual labor on a mission trip helping those less fortunate. How many adults are willing to do that?

Yes, we have much to learn from these teens. For one, they have embraced and implemented Jesus' lessons in Isaiah 58:6-10 and Matthew 25:39-45. As Mother Teresa said, "We are crayons in God's hands." How fortunate for mankind that God colors outside the lines!

I challenge each parishioner to make a commitment to fast or at least reduce their meals during next year's World Vision 30-Hour Famine. We "all" can "make a difference!"

Cheryl Casciani

A BIT OF LOCAL COLOR (Received in the mail at our church office recently)

Dear Pastor Tom,

I was thinking of how times change – when I came here in 1959, I was "Financial Secretary" for the church. Sunday I took the collection home – Monday I had a church deposit slip and stamp for checks. I counted it up – put coins in a wrapper and took it to the bank on my bike! I did, I swear! I used to laugh to myself to think of all that money and me on my bicycle. Now, two people count it and I don't know what all. An "only in Sonoma anecdote!"



Congregational love,
Maxine (Hoaglund)

WOMEN'S BIBLE FELLOWSHIP invites all women, young ladies, and friends of Faith to their annual Spring Luncheon, hosted by the Hannah-Sarah Circle, on Saturday, May 16th at 12:00 p.m. in Goehring Hall. There will be a guest speaker from Lutheran Social Services. Please bring your **Mite Box** and a salad. If you need a ride, please contact Shirley Engelman (933-8069) or Judy Hill (935-7441).

JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS A "MITE BOX?" The Mite Box is a small, cardboard coin box (available in the Narthex for your use) prepared by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (the international women's organization of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod). It is intended to provide a good way to dispose of occasional "loose change." The whole idea of the Mite Box stems from the story of the widow's mite in Mark 12:41-43. A destitute widow put her last few coins into the temple treasury. Jesus and His disciples were observing this and her generous and faithful gesture provided Him an opportunity to do some special teaching about selfless faith and trust in the providence of God. These Mite Boxes are collected periodically throughout the year by women's organizations in local LCMS parishes. We call our gathering "Women's Bible Fellowship." It's astonishing to discover that nearly a million dollars is collected annually through Mite Boxes alone.(!) Think of the good that your "loose change" can accomplish when gathered together and directed to specific ministries throughout our country that help and bless people in the name of Christ.

JEWISH MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE Join us Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. in Goehring Hall with Pastor Tom as our Sunday morning adult Bible class community examines the basics of faith with life-related study guides. **We continue our study of the Sixth Commandment.** A study of this Commandment requires some interesting knowledge about marriage and divorce at the time of Jesus, with comparisons and contrasts to our present day cultural and spiritual situation. Join the learning, the laughter, the fellowship, and the growth that emerges from our study of God's Holy Word.

OUR THURSDAY BIBLE CLASS COMMUNITY is held in Goehring Hall at 6:30 p.m. You can enter this study at any time. We would welcome you warmly to join us in the study of the Book of Revelation.



THANK YOU ONE AND ALL who volunteered to organize, decorate, and prepare for Faith's Fourth Annual Tea. The event was a huge success. A quick glance through the surveys tells us a most popular aspect of the Tea is the waiters. Once again men from our congregation performed an outstanding job in serving the 120 guests in a most professional manner. Our Shabby Chic Boutique was also very successful. Thank you **Martie Norrbom** for staging and setting everything up so beautifully! As always, **Ilse Eichler** performed miracles in her floral arranging. The food was exceptional and we got rave reviews from guests. Unfortunately, we cannot mention each and every volunteer, but we must acknowledge **Bernice Thorstenson** for her tireless work in the kitchen. She put in countless hours the entire week prior to the Tea, and was most likely the last to leave at the end of the day on Saturday! Again, thank you one and all; this most memorable day could not happen without your support and help.

Sincerely,
Sandra Thompson, Lucy Musick,
Cheryl Casciani, Janice Meneken

WORSHIP RENOVATIONS NOW COMPLETE The renovation of our worship space is now complete with the addition of two permanent Ambo candlestands. They were crafted for Faith Lutheran Church by Almy of Rye, New York, and purchased with funds from the Dorothea Goehring Memorial. Later on they will be dedicated in loving memory of Dorothea (who loved candles and was herself a beacon of Christ's light for others). The family, spread throughout the country, will gather for the dedication.

Why are we using the word "**Ambo**" instead of "**Pulpit**"? Churches that have two different places of speaking on either side of the altar reserve one of those places for the reading of the Scriptures and that place is called a **Lectern**. The place of speaking reserved for sermons is called a **pulpit**.

In churches where there is a **single place of speaking** from which readings of the Scriptures, sermons, leadership of the first half of the service, announcements, etc. are given is called an **Ambo**. Ambo is a Greek word which simply means "a raised place for speaking." The Ambo is considered the "**Altar of the Word**". For that reason it is flanked by candles recalling Psalm 119:105 "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

FAITH'S WOMEN TO SUPPORT LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES Each year, WBF selects a project to support. This year, we have chosen to participate with Lutheran Social Services and other congregations in putting together "Welcome Baskets" for the Mosaica Housing Program in San Francisco for homeless families and seniors. We at Faith can help approximately 24 seniors by donating any new or gently used items from the list below.

We will be collecting donations from April 26, 2009 to May 16, 2009. Please put your much needed donations in the container(s) located in the narthex.

Suggested items to donate, but not limited to:

Bath/Hand towels ∞ Bath soap ∞ Toilet paper ∞ Shampoo/conditioner ∞ Tooth-brushes ∞ Toothpaste ∞ Hair brushes/combs ∞ Small plastic laundry basket, etc.

Kitchen towels ∞ Paper towels ∞ Napkins ∞ Small kitchen knives ∞ Can opener ∞ Kitchen sponges ∞ Small cutting board ∞ Pantry items: salt, pepper, spices, sugar, mustard, ketchup, etc.

Kitchen broom ∞ Dust pan ∞ Floor mop ∞ Toilet bowl brush/cleaner, etc.

Clothes hangers ∞ Sheet set: full/double bed (54" wide) ∞ Blanket/comforter ∞ Bedspread ∞ Small bedside lamp ∞ Wall calendar ∞ Clock ∞ Sturdy floor lamp, etc.

Scissors ∞ Stationery ∞ Pens/pencils ∞ Books ∞ Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, etc.

Thank You
Women's Bible Fellowship

ONGOING ON-SITE IMPROVEMENTS Faith's Property Committee, under the effective leadership of **Gerhard Dohse** (and including **Scott Bamford, Paul Chapman, Tim Hingtgen, Al Martinson**), meet periodically to review on-site needs. Many of our readers will have noticed that our large parking lot facility having been newly resurfaced has generated some "rub off" which made the surface dangerously slippery in some areas. The company that resurfaced the lot has recently returned and "vacuumed" the entire lot. Soon you will see scaffolding appear on the roof of the church. The steeple and its base will be prepared and repainted in the near future. We also express our appreciation to **Vagn Nielsen** and **Nancy Heil** who keep a sharp eye out on all the new plantings of the church, replacing them as needed and nurturing them to health. The place looks beautiful!

THE SECOND “TEN COMMANDMENTS” We all know about the original Ten Commandments, but have you ever heard of the Second Ten Commandments? These pearls of wisdom have been attributed to Elodie Armstrong, with some additional comments by Harvey Mackay, a Minneapolis businessman and author.

THOU SHALT NOT WORRY for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities. People get so busy worrying about yesterday or tomorrow that they forget about today. Today is what you have to work with.

THOU SHALT NOT BE FEARFUL for most of the things we fear never occur. Every crisis is multiplied when we act out of fear. Fear is a self-fulfilling emotion. When we fear something, we empower it. If we refuse to concede to our fear, there is nothing to fear.

THOU SHALT NOT CROSS BRIDGES BEFORE YOU COME TO THEM for no one has yet succeeded in accomplishing this. Solve the issues before you right now. Tomorrow’s problems may not even be problems when tomorrow comes!

THOU SHALT FACE EACH PROBLEM AS IT COMES. You can only handle one at a time anyway. Problem solving is not easy, so don’t make it harder.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE PROBLEMS TO BED WITH YOU, for they make very poor bedfellows. Problems seem much worse at night. If I go to bed thinking of a problem, I tell myself that it will seem lighter in the morning, and it always is.

THOU SHALT NOT BORROW OTHER PEOPLE’S PROBLEMS. They can better care for them than you. We confess that we have broken this Commandment because we wanted to help someone without being asked, or we thought we were more equipped to handle the situation. But we wouldn’t have to deal with the consequences then either.

THOU SHALT NOT TRY TO RELIVE YESTERDAY. For good or ill, it is forever gone. Concentrate on what is happening in your life and be happy now! We think life will be better after we get a better job, make more money, get married, have a baby, buy a bigger house and so on. Yet, any of those may not make any difference. You are responsible for your own happiness.

THOU SHALT BE A GOOD LISTENER, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own. You can win more friends with your ears than with your mouth. Hearing is a sense, but listening is an art. Success could hinge on whether you have mastered this art. Most people won’t listen to what you’re saying unless they feel you have listened to them.

THOU SHALT NOT BECOME BOGGED DOWN BY FRUSTRATION, for 90% of it is rooted in self-pity and will only interfere with positive action. Better to take a break, collect your thoughts, and redirect your attention to a positive first step. Then go on from there.

THOU SHALT COUNT THY BLESSINGS never overlooking the small ones, for a lot of small blessings add up to a big one. We all have something to be grateful for, even on the worst days. Hey, you’re still on the green side of the grass!