



The Grapevine

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

Volume 1, October, 2008

Reformation Issue

SURRENDER TO SHEER GRACE Some special words to us from Father Martin:

“Even when faith is taught in the best possible way, it is difficult enough to learn it well....We cannot....think anything except that, if I have lived a holy life and done many great works, God will be gracious to me....The heart is always ready to boast of itself before God and say: ‘After all, I have preached so long and lived so well and done so much, surely God will take this into account....’ When you come before God, leave all that boasting at home and remember to appeal from justice to grace. But let anybody try this and he will see and experience how exceedingly hard and bitter a thing it is for someone who all his life has been mired in his work righteousness, to pull himself out of it and with all his heart rise up through faith.

I myself have now been preaching and cultivating it through reading and writing for almost 20 years and I still feel the old clinging dirt of wanting to deal so with God that I may contribute something, so that he will have to give me his grace in exchange for my holiness. Still I cannot get it into my head that I should surrender myself completely to sheer grace; yet this is what I should do and must do.”

Martin Luther, “On The Sum Of The Christian Life” (Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 51)

BACK TO THE BASICS

Dear Family of Faith:

You’ve just read some important words from our forefather in Christ, blessed Martin Luther. Even he found it difficult to move away from the impulse to try to merit God’s favor by our own good works. It’s a common problem we all have. We can do battle with this part of our nature by getting **BACK TO THE BASICS**. That is the title and theme for our next major comprehensive Sunday morning adult Bible Class study series led by yours truly in Goehring Hall at 8:30AM. It is vital for all of us, periodically through our lifetime, to return to the basics of Christian faith as it is taught and lived out by Lutheran people.

So, we are ready to embark on an extensive and in-depth study of the Three Articles of the Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments, the various Petitions of The Lord’s Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of Holy Communion...all the major parts of Luther’s Small Catechism. We will have special study guides throughout this series and special sidebar studies of important and interesting side issues as well.

If you have not been part of our Sunday morning Bible Class series, this would be an excellent time to enter the process. We **maintain** our Christian faith through regular Sunday worship and Word and Sacrament. We **grow** in our faith through regular Bible study...**it’s that important**.

Sincerely,

Remembering Dorothea Goehring

The majority of current parishioners at Faith did not have the pleasure of knowing Pastor Goehring, nor did they know Dorothea as the Pastor's wife. However, she was always honored as such. She often spoke of her husband's sudden death and her hurt feelings from being given short notice to vacate the parsonage. But, through it all, Dorothea remained steadfast and dedicated to Faith Lutheran. This was her beloved church and she enjoyed all aspects of membership.

She was present at nearly every General Assembly meeting, offering her opinion and advice. Through the years, she tirelessly served on countless committees, most recently on the Memorial Garden Committee; lent her hand with pot luck dinners; shared her beautiful soprano voice with solos during worship services; gave support to the most worthy projects and causes at church; and often times attended Church Council meetings.

Dorothea was always the first person on the dance floor and made sure everyone joined her. She loved game day, an occasional Book Club discussion, and Women's Bible Fellowship meetings. She was the ultimate social butterfly and loved life!

During the 36 years of knowing Dorothea, I will remember all aspects of her life mentioned above. But, more importantly, I will remember her as a dignified lady, a great example of living one's Christian faith, showing forgiveness, courage, and not letting the bumps in life keep her down.

It was wonderful seeing her worship with her daughter, Elaine, and son-in-law, Harry. Having her grandson, Stephen, and his family join her for worship gave her great joy and pride. And, we will continue to remember her each Sunday as her great-grandsons, Andrew and Garrett, enthusiastically join Pastor Tom for the Children's Sermon and ask for prayers for "Grammy."

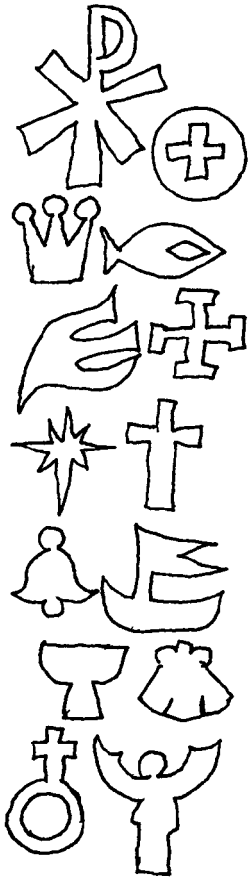
We give thanks for Dorothea's life and contribution to our congregation. May you enjoy kicking up your heels and dancing through eternity, Dorothea.

Cheryl Casciani
Council President

WOMEN'S BIBLE FELLOWSHIP PROJECT Once a year WBF selects a project to support. "Get On The Bus" overwhelmingly filled our hearts. This program re-unites children with their mothers and fathers in prison. It was founded in 1999 to organize a state-wide event providing the children of incarcerated mothers/fathers with a parental visit on the Fridays before Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June. Children receive free transportation, meals, activity bags, comfort items, a family photograph, a special teddy bear, a commemorative event t-shirt, and post-visit counseling. The event also mobilizes local communities and the media to raise awareness of the plight of children with incarcerated parents and to advocate for alternative sentencing, prisoners' rights, and children's rights.

We at Faith can help by donating much needed items for the children and their caregivers. During the month of October, Women's Bible Fellowship will provide a list of items to be donated. The list and a container for the donated items will be located in the narthex. Thank you for your support.

NEW CHOIR DIRECTOR FOR FAITH Peggy Carroll, one of our new members, has been Choir Director at St. John's Lutheran Church of Petaluma for the last 20 years. During that time, the choir grew considerably and the music program flourished. Now that she is a member here at Faith, she would like very much to begin a music ministry in our midst. We are looking to begin recruiting singers to sing on a regular basis at the Sunday morning service here at Faith. We will be planning an initial choir rehearsal some time soon. Details to follow.



CHRISMONS FOR FAITH Chrismons? The word is short for “Christ Monograms.” As we prepare for the Christmas season at Faith, we are going to decorate the Christmas trees in the Sanctuary with Chrismons this year. As many of our readers will know, the lighted Christmas tree is a uniquely Lutheran contribution to world Christendom. The Christmas trees were originally lit with candle light to symbolize the light of Christ for the world. As local fire departments will agree, lighted candles are not a particularly good idea for Christmas trees any longer. Happily, electric lights adorn our Christmas trees in a variety of colors.

Chrismons are made of white styrofoam and are decorated in gold and silver. The graphic to the left exemplifies some of the shapes of Chrismons. We are going to have a family gathering at Faith on Saturday, November 1st from 9:00-11:00AM for the purpose of decorating Chrismons. They will already be cut out of styrofoam and ready to decorate! Some models will be on hand to stimulate ideas. Plenty of decorating “stuff” will be available as well. This is for everybody...adults...teens...and children alike. We will decorate about 60 Chrismons which will be spread throughout two Christmas trees in the chancel during the Christ-tide (from December 24th through January 6th) of this year. Mark your calendars. Refreshments will be available throughout the morning. It should be a delightful experience in fellowship and creativity. Stay tuned for further promotion.

THANKSGIVING...LOOKING AHEAD AT FAITH The day of national Thanksgiving occurs on Thursday, November 27th this year. We are planning to have a Thanksgiving morning service here at Faith at 10:00AM. We are considering the possibility of having a turkey dinner in Goehring Hall immediately following with the family and friends of our congregation. Recognizing that many of our members and friends will be away from the parish with their own family celebrations, and also recognizing the fact that many within our parish congregation do not have family members in the immediate area, we are investigating the possibility of a Thanksgiving meal. Soon, a simple questionnaire will be available at Sunday services to indicate if you would find such an activity useful. Would you be able to attend? Could you bring some special guests who may not have family in the area? On the basis of your input, we will decide whether to have the Thanksgiving meal. The Thanksgiving morning service will definitely take place at 10:00AM.

A NOTE FROM FISH (Friends In Sonoma Helping) In September, First Wednesday's crew distributed food to 629 individuals here at Faith. FISH wishes to extend their appreciation and thanks to the members of Faith for the many years the church has hosted and supported this monthly giveaway.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP BOARD would like to thank everyone who participated in our memorable Women's Fall Retreat. We are sure all would agree that it was an enjoyable, informative, and heart-warming experience, leaving us all closer to the LORD and to each other.

A special heartfelt thanks to Pastor Tom for his generous gift of time, guidance, and leadership and most of all his unique and delightful style of teaching. Thank you Pastor Tom for sharing in our goal, Growth for Women's Bible Studies at Faith Lutheran. Our Bible circles meet once a month and we offer morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. We will be using a new and exciting study booklet called **YOU AND ME LORD**. If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact Judy Hill, 935-7441, or Shirley Engelman, 933-8069.

OKTOBERFEST We are going to celebrate Reformation this year with an Oktoberfest to be held on Saturday, October 25th, at 12:00 noon. There will be plenty of German food—beer—entertainment—pumpkins for the kids—and loads of fun! Please come in your German attire or Halloween costumes!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SERVE AS A COMMUNION ASSISTANT? We are recruiting some additional communion assistants to serve from time to time on Sunday mornings. It is a beautiful and meaningful way to serve the Lord. Men and women of Faith, if you are interested in considering this avenue of service, please speak to Pastor Tom. He will then schedule a training session and incorporate you into the overall schedule of service.

A SWEET "THANK YOU" To everyone who submitted recipes for the Faith Lutheran Church Cookbook. The Tea Committee is now in the process of typing, proofing, and categorizing them to be "press ready." In the near future, our book will be ready to send to Morris Press Cookbooks for publication. All proceeds will go toward costs to replace the flooring in Goehring Hall.

Just to tease and whet the appetite, here's a sizzling sample:

VEGETABLE SOUP

From: Pastor Tom

1 can [NOT aluminum] condensed vegetable soup
½ can water

Open can. Pour into microwaveable container. Add water and mix thoroughly. Place in microwave. Heat until done. Enjoy!