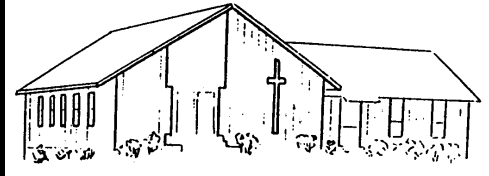


Messenger of Faith

Spreading the word about spreading the WORD



God Had You Mind!

The words of encouragement, written to believers in Galatia and Ephesus serve to encourage and motivate us as well by reminding us of God's grace and mercy in planning for our salvation before the foundations of the world.

Many early Gentile believers who had at first rejoiced in the Good News of their salvation were being threatened by the false teachers who insisted that the Gentile believers were not really saved unless they obeyed the Jewish laws of circumcision, etc. Essentially the message of these false teachers was this—Christ's death and resurrection were not enough, you must contribute to your own salvation. Consider how detrimental this message is. They were led to think that God's grace isn't as free as they had been told. They must have thought that God considered them second-rate, a mere afterthought in His plan of Salvation.

In Galatians 3:1-7, Paul calls on them to reflect on the truth of their salvation in Christ. Had they been saved by keeping a list of rules or by believing the Good News they had heard? Paul reasoned:

just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Galatians 3:6-7

Paul brings this Good News to assure the Galatians, and us, that salvation is as free as they had originally heard. We are saved by God's grace, period! Even as Gentiles, they may bear the honored title children of Abraham and children of God because their faith also is credited as righteousness.

Paul's words of encouragement are good for all of us to hear and consider. Whenever we are tempted to think that we must somehow contribute to our salvation and then find ourselves wallowing in the despair of doubt—promises such as these assure us that we are saved purely by God's grace in Christ, not by our feeble works or our even our heritage.

Paul continues by reminding the Galatians that they have been chosen just as Abraham was chosen. Consider the very next verse in his letter:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

Galatians 3:8

These words lift us up and inspire us as we consider our privilege in spreading the Good News of our crucified, risen, and ascended Savior Jesus Christ to the lost. We are reminded that God's salvation of Gentiles is not an afterthought but rather all part of God's gracious plan. When God made His Gospel promise to Abraham, He had us in mind. Long before God called Abraham to leave his homeland and promised to bless him and to bless all the nations of earth through his descendant—God chose us to be his very own. Paul reiterates the same truth for our comfort in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus:

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...
Ephesians 1:4a

When God made His Gospel promise to Abraham, He had the Christians in Galatia and Ephesus in mind and He

had us in mind. God also had in mind the lowly tribal person in India, the newly converted believer in Nepal who wants so much to learn more of his Savior, the woman at the shelter for abused wives, the neighbor down the street, the drug addict, the co-worker, the grandchild, the clerk at the gas station, the members of the congregations we serve, and the list goes on. The promise made to Abraham was one early step of God in carrying out what He had planned for us from before the foundation of the world. And so we go about the work we have been given, we count ourselves blessed to continue our part in carrying out the plan of our gracious Lord in gathering His sheep into the fold. His children across the world matter to Him and so they matter to us.

Mission Society

Go into all the world and preach the Gospel... Mk 16:15

On May 27th our Mission Society Meeting will begin at 6:30 PM.

The Mission Society plans to canvass our neighborhood by going door to door with brochures from the congregation. We hope to make those in our area aware of the Good News of Jesus and our congregation. Please make plans to attend! If you are unable to attend please remember this effort in your prayers.

Reports from the Congregation

Voters Meeting Report —

Our quarterly voters' meeting was held on April 26th following worship. Pastor Ohlmann opened the meeting with a short devotion and prayer. Pastor then presented his report summarizing the various activities currently going on at our church as well as laying out a schedule of things to come. The audit committee reported the financial books from 2008 to be in order. Art Pontow presented the treasurer's report. He reported a first quarter shortfall of \$1909.79. The total cash balance as of March 31st was \$65,717.90. John Elliott presented the property report. He reported that we are about 99% finished with the front addition and the final inspection would be soon. John stated that the next project he wanted the voters to consider would be to put a new carpet in the sanctuary and the voters approved this suggestion. The voters accepted the transfer of Mike and Stephanie Dobratz along with their children (Shawn and Ryan) from Messiah in Hales Corner, WI. The voters moved to have Pastor Ohlmann inquire as to the availability of a pastor or seminary professor to conduct services on July 19th and 26th while he is in India. If he is unable to find a pastor, the voters called Rob Sauers and Art Pontow to conduct services on those Sundays. The voters moved to authorize the use of the Family Assistance Fund for those that want to go to the CLC youth conference but can't afford the cost for up to \$100 per person. The voters moved to use the money in the Grace Kelpel Memorial Fund for landscaping and a new sign for the church pending approval by Nancy Fuszner and Carol Schmitz. The next quarterly voters' meeting will be held on July 12th.

Respectfully Submitted
In Christ's Service,
Robert F Sauers III
Secretary

Pastor's Report —

Inquiry Classes for membership

— Ashly Strumpler has finished her adult instruction classes and we are hopeful that she will be led to join our congregation.

The Mid-week Bible Study — continues to meet on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am. We have just begun a study of the New Testament books of James and Jude.

Confirmation Classes — On June 7th, the Lord willing, we will be confirm two young men in our congregation. Max and Rusty McDonald will have successfully completed three years of study. They have gone through Luther's Catechism twice and had one year of Bible History. Please remember these young men in your prayers that they make good and God pleasing use of their remaining time in confirmation class.

Garden-view Care Center Ministry

— I continue to serve the residents of the Garden-View Care Center on Thursday mornings as my schedule permits. There are usually 15-25 in attendance. We praise the Lord for allowing us to continue this wonderful opportunity to spread His saving word.

Living-Faith Family Bible

Camp — The voters of Living Word are in favor of a camping trip over a weekend in early Fall rather than the big camp that we have done the past nine years. With fewer families with children in our two congregations this seems to make sense.

Arise and Shine Retreat — Organizational work for this 20-30 year

old conference is underway. Alana Ahrens and myself met in Eau Claire this past week to discuss themes and speakers for the 2009 retreat. We decided on the theme: Be Ready! based on 1 Peter 3:15 with three sub-topics: Be Ready... to encourage your fellow Christian, to defend your faith, to share the Good News. We have contacted several potential speakers.

Grace Kelpel Memorial — I have spoken briefly to Nancy Fuszner concerning the monetary gifts that have been given to the congregation as a memorial to her mother. We discussed the possibility of using the memorial funds for landscaping and a new sign for the church.

Pastor's Schedule — Here's what the upcoming schedule looks like:

- May 14-18 — Rob and Kate's wedding (need vacancy pastor 5/17)
- June 15-19 — CLC General Pastoral Conference
- June 22-27 — CLC Youth Conference in Kentucky
- July 13-31 — Mission Helper Trip to India (two Sundays 7/19 & 7/26)
- August 6-9 — Arise and Shine Retreat
- October 12-16 — South Eastern Pastoral Conf. in Dallas, TX

Check our Website at:
StLouisLutheran.com

Current Financial Report

Annual Offerings to Date	Annual Budget to Date	Difference
\$24,958.78	\$34,698.32	— \$9,739.54
General Fund Cash Balance	as of May 10, 2009	\$26,866.96
Building Fund Balance	as of May 10, 2009	\$32,352.65 (115K loan)
Grace Kelpel Memorial Fund	\$4050.00	