



The Grapevine

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

—Volume 4, Summer Issue - July-August 2011—

ENCOURAGEMENT THEN . . . AND NOW!

Dear Family of Christ:

The more things change . . . the more they stay the same! People of every generation who have become attached to Christ through baptism are confronted with Christ's invitations—*Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest...Love one another as I have loved you...Blessed are you who hear the Word of God and keep it...Take- eat, take-drink; this do in remembrance of Me.*

According to the sacred story, on the first day of creation light emerged: the light that banishes darkness; the light that gives warmth; the light that gives life; the light that is God; the light that points to the One who would ultimately proclaim Himself to be the **light of the world**. As human life became organized into seven days of recurring experience, the first day of the "week" was held in honor of the creation of light. The light found its immediate expression in our experience of light from the sun. In our own corner of the galaxy, our sun gives light, gives warmth, gives context for life itself. On the first day of the work week, **a day in remembrance of the unconquered sun or sun-day**, an event occurred on Palestinian soil that, while virtually unknown for a period of time, began slowly but surely to seep into the consciousness of history. **On the first day of the week a resurrection occurred**, dormant flesh emerged whole, and the first day of the work-week eventually assumed a brand new meaning for people who would become attached to the dying and rising of **the new, unconquered Son**.

Early on in Christian experience, the first day of the week became a time to hear anew the sacred story, to receive its wisdom applied to present day, to turn away from the darker impulses of human life through repentance, and receive promised forgiveness in the most basic elements of life **words—water, bread, wine** – the celebration of love that forgives human failure and inspires people of faith to live the new life brought into being by the unconquered Son, Jesus Christ.

In every generation, people have needed encouragement to view the experience of Sun-day as a time of refreshment, renewal, insight, commitment, and growth. **The more things change...the more they stay the same.**

The following is a word of encouragement from the **Didascalia** which simply means, "the teaching of the Apostles." It is from a larger document written in Greek by and for the Church of **Syria** and it dates from the beginning of the **Third Century**. It is a significant historical window into the life of the early Christian church. It could just as easily have been written for the church of the Twenty-First Century, and for the family of believers who call themselves members of Faith Lutheran Church of Sonoma Valley:

PEACE
BE TO
YOU.

Now when you give instruction,
you should also command and exhort the people
to be constant in the assembly of the church,
and not to be prevented by other things, but always to
assemble,
so that no one diminishes the Church by failing to
assemble,
thus causing the Body of Christ to be short of a member.

For a person should take thought not only of others,
but also of himself, attentive to what our Lord said,
“Everyone who does not assemble with Me is actually
scattering.”

Since, therefore, you are members of Christ,
you should not scatter yourself from the church by not
assembling;

for you have Christ as your Head, as He Himself
promised:

“For you are partakers ‘with Me.’”

Therefore, do not be neglectful of yourselves,
and do not deprive our Savior of His members,
and do not rend and scatter His Body.

Do not consider your worldly affairs
more important than the Word of God;
but on the Lord’s day, leave everything

and dash eagerly to your church, for it is your glory.

Otherwise, what excuse before God have those who do not
assemble on the Lord’s day to hear the Word of life and to
be nourished with the divine food which abides forever?

(From Book II, Chapter 59)

’Nuf said?

With Loving Regard,

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

A very special ‘**Thank You**’ goes out to all the dedicated members of the Prayer Chain. The members of the Prayer Chain have, for many years, prayed for members of our congregation, as well as others, in their hour of need. Prayers are offered to our Lord for those in ill-health, those that are dying and for their families, those that are grieving, or for those just struggling with our ever-increasingly difficult world and, of course, many, many prayers of Thanksgiving. It is with great pleasure that their continued, loving and unselfish efforts on behalf of our congregation are acknowledged.

Anna Dohse

Church Seating

After several months of trying out the upholstered sanctuary chairs and padded pew, voting was held in early June. Two votes were taken to assure a majority vote for the final decision. The choice eliminated from the first ballot was to repair the pews and add padding. The second secret ballot determined a majority vote to keep the pews.

The church seating committee will meet again in the near future to select fundraising opportunities to pay for needed repairs for each pew. At the first mention of addressing the need to repair or replace the pews, Herb Heil contacted a couple of woodworkers/cabinet makers to determine the cost of repair. He was quoted \$100 per pew. Depending upon what actually has to be done to each pew and the amount of labor involved, the price may increase a bit. Thank you, Herb, for researching this for the committee.

It was interesting to hear the passion many parishioners expressed for keeping the pews. The majority of comments voiced were that pews are traditional and our pews look best with the style of our church. What I was most impressed with was the level of respect voiced when people disagreed. That is more important than which option was selected. Listening with an open heart and ear, especially when we disagree, is a gift to one another. The saying, "Agree to disagree" can result in all walking away winners, which is what happened on June 12th. Thank you my brothers and sisters.

In love and service,
Cheryl Casciani

THE LATEST "VERSION" OF FAITH'S CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORY



On Sunday, June 26th, we received new members into the household of Faith. **Following each new member class, our parish directory is updated for general use.** The latest directory (Summer 2011) includes the names and addresses of our new members, address changes of current members, and reflects the fact that a number of our members are now faithful departed and live in the resurrection promise of Jesus.

We are grateful to **Valerie Kemp** and **Janice Meneken** for providing our recent updated version of the directory. Please check your mail file for your copy; additional copies can be found on the counter in the narthex.

UPDATE ON THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS Thrivent initiated a National Chapter Response to help those affected by devastating tornados in our country. The Women's Bible Fellowship and congregational fund drive last month totaled \$1321. Thrivent added \$1.00 for every \$2.00 we collected. Thanks a million for your participation!

Our local Sonoma County Chapter still has 2011 funds available, so we plan to request money for Relay For Life Walk-A-Thon Cancer Fund activities to be held August 6-7, as well as Christmas funds for FISH.

Let us know if you have other project ideas—Thanks!

Valerie Kemp & Mary Piller
FLC Thrivent Coordinators

BIBLE STUDY THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER MONTHS

Worship in Word and Sacrament, weekly Bible study, and the fellowship of God's people comprise the lifeblood of the church. On **Sunday mornings**, we gather in Goehring Hall at **8:30am** with Pastor Tom to continue our on-going study of **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**. There are four lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, each of them flesh out special abilities and opportunities for service within the congregation. It is a lively experience in Christian fellowship and we commend it to everyone.

On **Thursday evenings**, we gather in Goehring Hall at **6:30pm** with Pastor Tom for an on-going study of **St. Paul's letters to the Church at Corinth**. It was a church wracked by dissention and division. Immorality had become quite acceptable within the congregation's experience. Paul's counsel to married people and those contemplating long-term relationships was laid out (eventually reconsidered by the Apostle because the imminent second coming of Christ would be substantially delayed), and cultural considerations plaguing the church of that day (eating food offered to idols) **all yield basic principles of faith and conduct** not only for the church's immediate experience in Corinth, but also for the church of the ages.

Our Thursday community voted to continue its study throughout the summer months. We would love to have you join us. You can enter this study at any time and immediately begin receiving the benefits derived from it.

THE USHER

An elderly woman walked into a local country church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps. "Where would you like to sit?" he asked politely. "The front row, please," she answered. "You really don't want to do that," the usher said. "The Pastor is really boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" inquired the woman. "No," he said. "I'm the pastor's mother," she said indignantly. "Do you know who I am?" he asked. "No," she said. "Good!" he answered.

CROP HUNGER WALK We recently received a letter of appreciation from the Sonoma CROP Walk Steering Committee. This year, local recipients of 25% of funds raised (\$10,000) were FISH, Redwood Empire Food Bank, The Brown Baggers, and Meals on Wheels (Trinity Church). The letter is posted on the Connections Board in Goehring Hall for all to read.

FISH FIRST WEDNESDAY FOOD GIVEAWAY



Special thanks to **Amada De La Torre, Mackenzie Mackling, Shirley Engelman, and Mary Piller** for helping at the FISH food giveaway on June 1st. Mary and Shirley sorted food and Mackenzie, Amanda and John served coffee, juice and snacks to the people waiting in line and entertained the small children with crafts on this cold and rainy day. All enjoyed serving Christ in this meaningful way.



SOAP FOR HOPE Thank you one and all for your donations of soap/hand sanitizer for our Haiti Mission Project. Our box of soaps was mailed to Haiti:Mission in Florida on June 1st. Following is a letter recently received by **Nancy Heil**, our Stewardship Chair, in response to our donation:

We just received the 3 boxes of soap and hand sanitizer that you sent from Faith Lutheran Church. Thank you so very much. We try to always take soap and hand sanitizer when we go to Haiti and when we have medical teams we do teaching on hygiene and hand out kits with washcloth, toothbrush, soap, sanitizer, a few band aids and antibacterial ointment. Your donation is certainly welcome and will be used right away.

Thank you again,
Helen Roenfeldt, Executive Director, Mission:Haiti (954-868-8218)

There is an enormous amount of information at the Mission:Haiti's website—mission:haiti99.org. Take a moment to visit this site to learn more about their projects, as well as information on their most recent medical trip.



It has pleased Almighty God in His loving wisdom to call unto Himself the soul of our beloved **ESTHER MAGDALENE (SOLEM) RIDENOUR** who died peacefully at her home on Wednesday, June 8, 2011, at the age of 81. We express our sincere condolences and our confidence in the resurrection promise of our Lord Jesus to her daughter Connie Boysen, her son Tom Bakke, and his wife Linda Brekken, and also to her extended family.

A memorial service was celebrated here at Faith Lutheran Church on Saturday, June 18th, followed by a reception in Goehring Hall. The reception was hosted by our Board of Fellowship and assisted by contributions from various members of Faith in loving memory of our dear Esther.

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

CHRISTIANITY IS A VERB It doesn't require in-depth study of the New Testament to notice that being a Christian is anything but a passive state of being. When our Lord Jesus gave His great commission on the Hill of the Ascension long ago, His marching orders to us were filled with action words—**believe, go, tell, show, pray, love, witness, watch, hope, serve, hear, do!**

Christianity is much more than a belief system. It is a life style...following the One who obeyed His Father's will and went all the way to the cross for us to win our forgiveness, our freedom, and our victory over sin and death! **Christianity is a daily affair that involves simple, concrete, practical ways to speak and share the love of Christ with others.**

It costs to be a disciple! There is to be follow-through on our Lord's invitation to serve. However, as we seek to be Christians (little Christs) to each other...there are eight gifts we can give others in the name of Christ that don't cost a cent! They are:

The gift of listening...but you must really listen—no interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response—just listening.

The gift of affection...be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and hand-holds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

The gift of laughter...clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

The gift of a written note...it can be a simple, "Thanks for the help," or a full sonnet. A brief handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime and may even change a life.

The gift of a compliment...a simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

The gift of a favor...every day go out of your way to do something kind. Spontaneous acts of kindness are very powerful.

The gift of solitude...there are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

The gift of a cheerful disposition...the easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone. Really, it's not that hard to say, "Hello," or "Thank you."