

From Our Pastor—

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Cor. 12:27)

Are We Qualified For the Job?

It hit me like a ton of bricks! This time, thankfully, not in a bad way, but in a way that was inspiring and revealing.

We were gathered in our Wednesday Bible study looking at our fifth session of Acts 16:1-15 when the discussion turned to the sixth through tenth verses which read as follows:

“They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.⁷ When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;⁸ so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.⁹ During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them”.

(Acts 16:1-15, NRSV)

The discussion quickly moved into a deeper discussion of the Holy Spirit’s working in and through individuals and communities and how difficult it is to discern the difference between the Spirit’s work and our own individual preferences, thoughts, and desires. The discussion was vibrant and rich, each one of the five of us gathered sharing in turn. After mentioning that one of our key elements in the visioning process is discerning the Holy Spirit’s movement, a person honestly shared the following “I wonder how many of us feel qualified to do that (type of work). Whether we want to do that work, well ..., that’s another question.” I couldn’t resist asking the group the question. So I asked it. “How many of us are qualified to do this work?” I was expecting everyone to respond “I am. I am.” However, instead ..., the room fell amazingly silent. That “non-response” spoke volumes! From at least two of the participants present, I would have expected a positive response. But, the reality was that they “did not feel qualified.”

Operating from a theology of “the priesthood of all believers” (that is, we are all “priests and priestesses,” one for another, for the purpose of God’s holy work among each of us) and having a strong conviction in our baptism as having given us an eternal identity in God’s kingship work on earth, I believe we are each qualified to contribute to a visioning process. In our baptismal liturgy, these words were spoken over our newest member of Christ’s church universal **Dylan Dwain Frey**: “Dylan Dwain, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” From our Lutheran heritage, we remember that as Dylan was baptized, we remember our own baptism and the claim that God now has on us. In Holy Baptism, each person was given promises and treasures (which bring) – “... victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God’s grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with its gifts.”¹

Since each of us has been given the Holy Spirit by virtue of our baptism, it only makes sense that each of us is qualified to discern with the faithful where God is calling Bethany to go into God’s future.

This, then, brings us to the second question. “Do we each want to discern together where God is calling/leading us?” In the words of one of our faith-filled Bible study participants “Whether we want to do that work ... well, that’s another question?”

*Yours in Christ-
Pastor Jeff*

¹ Tappert, Theodore G., The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1959, 441.41.

“Faith Moments” – A New November Liturgy Opportunity

From my experience both as a lay member and now as an ordained minister, sometimes the best way to learn is by “doing.” This is my hope in offering this opportunity for people to speak about their “faith” and what it has meant to them throughout their lives.

Each Sunday in November, at both services, I will ask one person to take a few moments in the liturgy to speak about their faith. Hearing another person articulate what their faith has meant to them throughout their lives is a great way that we share our faith, face to face. Not only is this needed among ourselves, I would even say that it is

“necessary” in order that we continue to grow (and encourage others in their growing) and learn from each other the tremendous gift that we have been given that has sustained us throughout our lives.

Please consider sharing a “Faith Moment” during a coming Sunday Service in November. Your witness will encourage our faith community and awaken and stir up our hearts and minds for Christ.

If you would like to share a “Faith Moment” during a November service, please see or call Pastor Jeff at Church (503)284-3836; home (503)667-7897 or cell phone (503)679-8056.

Pastor Jeff

Trainings Offered for New Lutheran Hymnal

It has been nearly thirty years since we have had a new hymnal as a core component for our traditional worship service. Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the new hymnal for ELCA, makes its debut in October when pew, accompaniment, and leaders’ editions are made available to the whole church. A host of events will introduce and provide training for print and online resources. The Oregon Synod encourages every congregation to send participants. Cost is \$20, which includes lunch and one copy of the pew edition. The two events scheduled for November are listed below.

Note from Pastor: Several from Bethany will be attending the November 4 event. If you are interested in attending either training, please see or call Pastor Jeff at church (503)284-3836 or at home (503)667-7897. We need to RSVP soon!

Saturday, November 4
8:30 am to 3:30 pm
Milwaukie Lutheran Church
3810 SE Lake Rd.
Milwaukie, OR 97222
503.653.0250
milwaukielc@comcast.net

Saturday, November 18
8:30 am to 3:30 pm
Bethesda Lutheran Church
4445 Royal Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402
541.688.9085
lindab@princeoflife.org

Council Considers Transportation Ministry – 1st Step: Identifying Volunteer Drivers

(Reprinted from the October 2006 Herald)

Church council has been wrestling deeply with the issue of providing reliable/dependable transportation for members who no longer drive to church on Sunday.

We realize that providing rides for others is not always possible for individuals depending upon one's schedule and/or other commitments on Sunday mornings. Many of you have provided rides for others. (Please forgive me if I do not mention your name – most people already know that you do!) People such as **Jim & Ann Pوليوff** provide a ride each Sunday for **three other members**. That's fantastic! **Wanda Joaquin** brought **Helen Carter** each Sunday until Helen's passing. Several of you car pool to church each Sunday which is also a great idea. **Wanda Campbell** uses Tri-Met each Sunday for going to church but needs to rise early in order to catch her ride. All of these transportation modes seem to work pretty well. But we may be at (or near) our transportation maximum for providing rides for other members.

Council visited some ideas of providing transportation through Tri-met or transportation services such as taxis. All of them seem to have their limitations either with dependability or being cost prohibitive (too expensive).

Then something wonderful happened. A council member found a transportation system that offers buses (mini, full, and even physically disabled vehicles) *for free*. That's right, free! We still have to pay for the gasoline that we would use to pick up members and find qualified volunteer drivers (they can be non-Bethany members), but the vehicles themselves would be loaned to us *free of charge*.

Council decided that the best way to approach this ministry venture is to line up volunteer drivers, and then contact members who do not already have dependable transportation to see if they would be interested.

This is where you come in. Do you know of someone who might be interested in donating a few hours of their time Sunday mornings to transport some great senior members to Bethany? Our calculations suggest about six volunteer drivers would be needed and used in a rotating list. You don't even have to ask them yourself. I will. Just give me a name and phone number and I will be glad to contact them to see if they would be interested in helping us in this ministry. It might be someone in your neighborhood that you know does not go to church on Sundays or a relative or friend who has been wanting to get more involved in volunteering.

Let us think together who might serve our members as a volunteer driver. Do you know of a college student who might be interested? They would be a great resource to help us in this endeavor. Let's think together how we could grow our service with those who are able to come but are limited due to their transportation needs. It would be such a blessing to have those for Sunday worship who do not normally come because transportation is not readily provided. Let's see what we can do to help make this ministry a reality and let's give a big "thank you" to those who already provide rides to our members as well. God bless us in this endeavor!

Pastor Jeff

Do You Have Some News for the Herald? – You Can Put Your Written Articles in the Bottom Left Box Next to the Office Counter

If you have articles for publishing in the monthly Herald newsletter, please place them in the bottom left hand slot labeled Herald Articles/Information before the information due date (published on the calendar each month). From now on, this will be our designated area until such time that a need arises to change that location. We would appreciate you leaving your name with the article in case our editor has any questions about it. Thanks for your help and assistance in this matter!

October Council Meeting Highlights

Council met October 10 at 7pm with four members excused. Transportation Ministry: We still need a number of volunteer drivers before we can proceed with this ministry; vehicles are available for Sunday use for the cost of fuel only. Property: Several plugged-up downspout drains have already been cleared by volunteers in anticipation of gutter replacement which should occur in about two weeks. Transformational Ministry: A lengthy discussion was focused on the importance of engaging the whole congregation in our visioning process, and on strategy on how next to proceed. Council approved a recommendation to sponsor a Watoto concert on February 6 and authorized \$100 in expenses. The nine-month financial reports show general fund income of \$49,592 and general fund expenses of \$80,183. Transfers from savings were used to pay the difference. Next Council meeting is November 14 at 7pm.