The Herald

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From Our Pastor–

Listening for God

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9, NRSV)

Listening is not so easy to do these days. Anyone with hearing disabilities knows how challenging it can be to hear what others are saying, even with hearing aids working well.

Many times in my home our family will sometimes try to hold conversations from different rooms of the house. You may remember those times. Whether out of necessity or convenience, I (or another family member) will call to another person in our house saying "Supper is ready. It's time to eat." When I'm trying to get the message to my eldest daughter (a teenager with her door closed), it can become next to impossible for her to hear the message that it is "Time to eat." Hearing can quickly become impacted by the obstacles (such as closed doors) that we allow to come between the speaker and the hearer.

While many of us, either through self-imposed barriers or hearing disabilities, may struggle to hear what is being said from time to time, God is still working mightily when we *listen* to the still, small voice of God's Spirit within us. While we may **hear** many sounds, noises, and conversations throughout any given day, it is not the same thing as **listening.** Listening involves our whole selves.

As we studied the story of young Samuel listening to God's call of him (1 Samuel 3:1-4:1) in our Wednesday Bible study, we were reminded that God gives us both a *promise* and *a call*. *The promise* – Even when we feel God is silent, God will eventually break the silence and respond to us. *The call*:

"We are called to listen for God's voice and listen to God's voice. The mission belongs to God. We are not allowed to do what is right in our own eyes (from Judges 21:25 when Israel lived in the era of the judges). Rather, we are sent by God to do God's will. That is our call. We have no other."[1]

If we are faithful in attending Bible studies and worship, it is not too difficult in listening *to* God's word. Our readings and our gospel are shared each Sunday. Scripture finds its way into the center of both our Bible study times and our worship service. These are simple examples of listening *to* God's word.

But how well do we listen *for* God's word? There is no simple procedure or set of instructions to follow as we seek to listen *for* a word of God. But there will be one characteristic common to our *listening* – and that will be our *intentionality*. When we set aside time for prayer to let our petitions be known to God, do we also set aside time to *listen for God's word* to us? When we trust in God to give a word (and that word may come through someone other than God), we allow God's Spirit (which even knows the depths of God – see 1 Corinthians 2:10) to move through our hearts and lives and make its way to our listening. It is then that we may perceive "This is not *any word*, this is God's Spirit stirring within us."

May we dare to practice our *listening for God* as we listen *to God* through the word shared and the gospel proclaimed! May our voices respond in unison to God's voice who spoke to the child, Samuel:

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:9, NRSV)

Yours in Christ- Pastor Jeff

[1] Fryer, Kelly A. and Jacobson, Rolf A., No Experience Necessary Bible Study: Unit Five; That's a Deal, Augsburg Fortres: Minneapolis, 2006, p. 52.

9:30 am Service includes Congregational Bible Study Beginning September 10

I look forward to this time of sharing together. Phil and I are working together to create a shortened liturgy. Even though in a good portion of our service we will be looking at Scripture together, our time together is still worship. It will still have the four main components of worship: *calling, word, meal*, and *sending*.

I hope you will find our time together engaging, exciting with great preaching/teaching and music! We are doing this alternative service to steep us in God's word so that God's Spirit may dwell within us as we move toward a three year vision together.

We need everyone who is capable of coming to join us! Everyone in our congregation brings a piece of (God's) wisdom to the visioning process. Your participation in the visioning process is vital for our ministry/mission and our "vision ownership" together!

Below are chapter summaries. *I encourage everyone to read the appointed text before coming each Sunday*. Study questions will be distributed for further exploration during Adult Bible Study and midweek Bible study where appropriate.

Sept. 10 – Acts 2:1-36 – "The Coming of the Holy Spirit and Peter's Address to the Crowd'"

Sept. 17 – Acts 2:37-47 – "The First Converts – about three thousand baptized"

Sept. 24 – Acts 10:1-33 – "An angel of God tells Cornelius 'Bring Peter here!'"

(Oct. 1 – Regular service; Pastor is in Portland Marathon)

Oct. 8 – Acts 10:34-48 – "Gentiles Hear the Good News and Receive the Holy Spirit"

Oct. 15 – Acts 16:1-15 – "Timothy joins Paul/Silas; Paul's Vision; Lydia's Conversion"

Oct. 22 – Acts 16:16-40 – "Paul and Silas imprisoned; God sets them free!"

Rally Day Sunday – For All Ages

What can three youth and an adult youth leader do for a kick-off Sunday? Come and see for yourself as we gather for an engaging time of worship and Bible Study beginning Rally Day Sunday – September 10.

God is working in the hearts and lives of us all. I have seen God's working in our youth as well as we gather for fellowship most Wednesdays at Activity Night. Do you know who our Bethany youth are? They are **McKenzie Meyers**, **Twyla Wise**, and **Christian Peterson.** Each of them is growing up in faith through their connection in our faith community here at Bethany. Your words of encouragement and support can mean a great deal for their growth and faith. We are looking forward to their helping in our **9:30 Service** on September 10. Much of what you see with regards to balloons and other festival items will be from their creative efforts that Sunday. Please welcome them to the service as some of them have not fully experienced a traditional worship service before.

As if a celebration event were not enough, we are going to be blessed by participating with parents **Stacy** and **Cliff Frey**, grandmother **Donna Frey**, and family with the Baptism of **Dillon Frey** on September 10 as well. What a wonderful day for celebrating God welcoming Dillon into God's family and for our remembering the promise which God has given to each of us.

I hope you are able to attend with us. Please, oh please, call us if you are in need of a ride that Sunday (or future Sundays). Call Bill (503)282-4610 or Pastor (503)667-7897 directly by Saturday evening so that we may help coordinate a ride for you. Much thanks and we will see you on September 10, Rally Day, if not before!

New Lutheran Hymnal – Training begins in October

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, a 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 one copy of the pew edition.

It has been nearly thirty years since we have had a new hymnal as a core component for our traditional worship service. Our congregation and our larger church body throughout the ELCA would do well to attend a training so that we may make an informed decision before purchase considerations are addressed.

Note from Pastor: I've noticed that the closest training, in Milwaukie, is scheduled for the same day as our Bethany Bazaar, November 4. Therefore, I believe we would do well to put together a group to attend one of the other two trainings, either in Redmond on October 21 or in Eugene on November 18.

I will be glad to help coordinate a car or two of people interested in attending. A night's lodging may be required; I am hoping financial assistance can be rendered to those offering their time to attend.

Please see me if you may be interested in attending or call me at church (503)284-3836 or at home (503)667-7897. We need to RSVP soon!

All events are scheduled for **Saturdays**, **8:30 am** to **3:30 pm**.

October 21
Zion Lutheran Church
1113 SW Black Butte Blvd
Redmond, OR 97756
541.923.7466
nativity@bendcable.com

November 4
Milwaukie Lutheran Church
3810 SE Lake Rd.
Milwaukie, OR 97222
503.653.0250
milwaukielc@comcast.net

November 18
Bethesda Lutheran Church
4445 Royal Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402
541.688.9085
lindab@princeoflife.org

Day Camp Great Success; Plans made for 2007 Day Camp

Twelve adult volunteers combined with four fabulous staff people from Lutherwood hosted 27 campers (includes six junior counselors) this year. Our staff from Lutherwood – **Josh** (who returned from last year), **Ross, Devin,** and **Kaija** did a terrific job with our kids. Several parent volunteers of our campers joined the ranks with our incredible Bethany volunteers to make for a solid core for the week. A big thank you goes to the following people who contributed their time and effort: **Barbara Andersen, Donna Frey, Ann Pulliof, Phyllis Parker, Midori Suzuki, Bill Markwart, Pastor Jeff, Emily Bethke, Debra Porter,** and **Mary Ann Schelb**.

A special thank you goes to **Eileen Eckart** for being our day camp coordinator/registrar and to **LeDonna Schrumm** for coordinating meals/snacks for our campers which they just loved. Thanks to all of you who were asked to consider being a host family for our Lutherwood staff. A generous private donor provided funds for housing our staff in an economical motel which the staff absolutely loved! This arrangement worked very well for them. We are looking forward to Day Camp in summer of 2007 and would love to have more volunteers from our congregation as helpers next year.

Your efforts would be so appreciated by other volunteers and staff people from Lutherwood next summer! Please consider what way you can encourage this terrific outreach ministry!!

‘Going Like 60’ Features Key Speakers Starting Sept. 28

Sometime a few months ago, I thought about how this important fellowship ministry group could become revitalized. My thoughts were “This is such a great gathering of members/friends! How can I possibly make it more exciting for them in coming?” Then I thought about setting up a key speaker each gathering. Maybe that would be a way to engage each other and (possibly) invite other friends to join us for a great meal and fellowship with one another. I said “Yes” to committing to finding interesting speakers for our group. However, I would be most interested in knowing what our Going Like 60 attendees may like to hear? We have some really interesting people all over the community and throughout the Portland area. Please give me your ideas (or possibly even subject matter) and I will arrange accordingly.

Our thanks to **Ruth Sleasman** who has been serving as coordinator for the ‘Going Like 60’ group and to **Ann Pulioff** who has agreed to take over this task.

Our first gathering will be **Thursday, September 28,** at **Noon.** The ‘Going Like 60’ group usually meets on the 4th Thursday of each month, with the exception of holiday weeks and special events. If you have any questions, please contact **Ann Pulioff** at **(503)254-8702**.

Pictorial Directory Update

At the last church council meeting, our pictorial directory coordinator, **Barbara Andersen,** reported that Olan Mills is “in process” of completing Bethany’s pictorial directory. Many thanks to all of you who have made this directory possible by setting up and attending a scheduled appointment with Olan Mills. This appears to have been a positive experience for the whole. Many thanks to **Barbara** and her pictorial directory team for making this all possible. We all wait with great anticipation to see the “final product” coming soon for all of us to see and enjoy.

August Council Meeting Hightlights

Council met August 15 at 7pm with two members absent. Major discussion included planning for the ongoing congregation-wide visioning process, August 20 Congregational Meeting, and six-week Worship / Bible Study starting September 10. Council reviewed Bethany’s 2006 Day Camp attendance (21 campers, 6 junior counselors, 12 adult volunteers, and 4 Camp Lutherwood staff). Council recommends that we plan for a July 30-August 3, 2007 Day Camp. The seven-month financial reports show total income of $43,237 and general fund expenses of $63,441. Transfers from savings were used to pay the difference. Quotations for replacing the front side gutters are expected this week; four companies were contacted. The next Council meeting will be September 12 at 7pm.