



Your Pastor's Ponderings

This month, I would like to take a break from my series on important figures in the Bible to report to you on the actions of the 2009 ELCA National Church-wide Assembly held in Minneapolis, MN a couple of weeks ago.

The one topic that made our local paper is the fact that the ELCA approved resolutions that will allow the ordination of clergy who are in a same sex long term committed relationship and take steps to recognize and support others who are in such relationships. Please note that these resolutions affect only those congregations who wish to call a pastor of such orientation or who wish to take such steps. These resolutions passed with a 67 percent approval vote. While this is not the way many of us would have voted, it is a significant portion of the voice of the larger church.

I understand there are many who are in disagreement over this, but some are not. While we may not agree with each other, we should recognize that both sides of the conversation are honestly trying to be faithful. As the presiding bishop Hanson said, “We meet one another finally, not in our agreements or our disagreements, but at the foot of the cross — where God is faithful, where Christ is present with us, and where, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are one in Christ.”

In the spirit of that statement, I would like to share a story that happened at the Assembly during this conversation. If you wanted to speak for the mentioned resolution, you were instructed to come to a green microphone and if you wanted to speak against the resolution you were instructed to stand at a red microphone. As you can imagine during this conversation, people said all manner of things -- prayerful things, hurtful things, thoughtful things, and idiotic things on both sides of the aisle. Some probably couldn't help but think, if Jesus was here, he'd be standing in the red line and others probably thought, if Jesus was here, he'd be standing in the green line.

Then a young pastor got up to speak at the green microphone and the first thing he said, in a quivering voice was “anyone else

frightened to speak? I'm shaking. Please pray for me” and the man standing right next to him at the red microphone reached over and laid his hand on him and prayed while his brother of the opposing view point spoke.

Upon seeing this compassionate action, one pastor reflected, “Jesus isn't standing behind the red microphone or the green one. Jesus is standing in between the two.” And I think she's right -- that is the gospel. Jesus stands at the intersection between us. On the cross, Jesus stands between God and sinful humans. In the world, Jesus stands between the red and the green microphones, between the red and the blue states, between conservatives and liberals, wherever there is hurt and discord, and offers us life and salvation in the Words of eternal life and in the Sacrament of his own body and blood.

In his note to clergy following the assembly Bishop Pile included this reflection from Dr. Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, who said:

As a guest of this assembly, I have listened and watched very carefully as you have taken this task very seriously. You have not addressed these questions as a stand-alone gathering. You have invited into your midst ecumenical partners and partners from other churches. Some of these ecumenical partners and sister churches have agreed, or some have disagreed, with the direction you are taking. I want to emphasize that in this context, even the expressions of disagreements are signs of the indivisibility of the Church of Jesus Christ.

As you lined up in front of the podium in the red line or the green line, you have spoken with one another from your hearts. You have spoken from your pain and from your struggles. You have spoken with respect for one another and with dignity. I have to say that this manner of deliberating among yourselves does a great deal of honor to your church. Again and again I've heard you make reference to Paul's letter to the Galatians in which you say that we are to bear one another's burden, for in doing so, we fulfill the law of Christ.

This is a mark of a Christian community, which sharply distinguishes the Church from the ways of this world, in which each person bears their own burdens. But in the Church, we are not allowed to bear our burdens alone. My presence here is a sign of how much we care for you. It is an embodiment of the prayers for your work from the

Church around the world. Your pain is our pain. Your struggles are our struggles. Even when our members express concern and disagreement with what you are doing, that expression of disapproval is a mark that our lives are tied together in ways that we can never explain. Let us continue to pray for one another. For in doing so, we carry the burdens of one another.

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson also urged us to continue to be in conversation even if we weren't in unity. And so ministry will continue to happen in our church. Jesus will continue to be present for us. We will continue to be the church – we will celebrate the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism, we will teach and preach the Holy Scriptures according to the Lutheran confessions and the notions of God's grace, forgiveness and salvation. We will serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ by being a compassionate people and loving the neighbor.

Because honestly, there are other important things to focus our ministries and energies on – feeding the hungry, helping the poor, caring for the sick, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. These are ministries that our congregations (and the ELCA for that matter) do well – through programs like World Hunger, the Somerset Food Pantry, Hospice, Thrivent Builds, our National Youth Gathering trips, etc. There is good ministry happening here and all over.

Lest we forget, the ELCA also managed to accomplish other important and significant matters during the Churchwide Assembly.

- We approved full communion with the United Methodist Church. [please note full communion is not a merger. But it means that the two churches express a common confession of Christian faith; mutual recognition of Baptism and sharing Holy Communion, and other theological issues.]
- We adopted the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" which addresses a spectrum of topics relevant to human sexuality as whole from a Lutheran perspective.
- We voted to raise \$10 million to help with the ELCA's HIV and AIDS strategy.
- We voted overwhelmingly to support a program that seeks to eliminate malaria in south-Saharan Africa by 2015.

- We agreed to urge comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration policies and processes, and to call for suspension of immigration raids until such reform is enacted.
- We approved memorials (resolutions brought from individuals and synods) that would advocate for justice for women; encourage providing worship and education materials for blind and visually impaired church members; and enable recruitment of people of color as clergy candidates.

I would be happy to meet with anyone who wants be in conversation about any of these issues. As we continue to move forward in difficult times, I pray that God grant each of us sensitivity, humility, boldness, courage, faithfulness, and forgiveness as we continue to strive toward God-pleasing harmony in what we believe, teach, and confess.

Pastor Will



Brother or Sister, Can You Spare a Dime? – To Change the World

Our Sr. High Youth group plus youth groups across the ELCA are taking part in an effort to raise \$1 million for ELCA World Hunger as part of the Change the World: **2009 Lutheran Youth Challenge**. During the Youth Gathering in New Orleans, the 37,000 participants collected \$154,000 worth of change for change by literally sharing their spare change.

To date, the ELCA has raised \$270, 000 toward this Change the World initiative.

All young adults and youth groups are encouraged to participate in this **year-long challenge**. Go the **Change the World** Web site if you'd like more information.

Or share your spare change by dropping it in various containers placed in the narthexes of each of our congregations.

Be a part of



BIKE FOR BIKES!



What if you had to teach Sunday School or preach at a worship service at a church 10 miles away, but had nothing but your feet to get you there? It would take a long time! Some of the pastors and evangelists in Kenya have a great distance to travel and reliable transportation is hard to come by, and one motorbike costs about \$5000. So we're taking to the trail to raise money to purchase motorbikes for those who are sharing the good news of Jesus in our companion synod. Come on out for an afternoon of fun!

Who: You! Bike Riders of all ages

When: Sunday, September 27, 2009
2:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Where: Rockwood Bike Trail

Snacks will be provided during the 14 mile ride.

Riders: Please indicate that you would like to participate by pre-registering by September 20th at 443-3965. You are asked to find sponsors for the ride or donate a personal "entry fee" (of your choosing) for the ride. Money will be collected on the day of the ride. *All checks should be made out to "Thrivent Financial" with 'KELC – Wells' in memo line.* Any questions can be directed to Pastor Elisa Osman at 443-3965.

If you do not want to ride, we still need your help. Please sponsor a rider, consider donating a light snack food or bottled water for the event, or donate your time by supervising the registration and snack tables!



Produce Table – Bring Your Extra Garden Veggies to Church

The harvest time is coming and it is coming abundantly. I know this by the seven large zucchini which were graciously left on our porch. (Thank You for sharing.)

If you have any extra produce from your garden that you don't know what to do with, we invite you to bring it to church and leave it on our Free Produce table to share with other members in our church. If you need some fresh vegetables, feel free to take what you need without obligation. This table is a sign of the Abundance of God's grace, partake of it as you will.



Web Page Update – The home page for our parish on the Internet has recently been updated with a new look. Check it out @– www.newcentervillelutheran.org.

Thank you to Jeff Sechler for being our web page administrator and designer. When you see him, let him know that he's doing a great job.



FYI: Your pastor on the Web

If you're interested, Pastor Will has both a Facebook account and recently started a Twitter account during the National Youth Gathering. If you'd like to follow him on either application, you are invited to do so.



VBS Thank You

Arrgh! A hearty adventurous thank you to everyone who participated in Vacation Bible School. Over thirty kids had a great time learning about the Adventures of Paul with those wacky adventurers -- Captain C. Level and his silly lobster friend, Jacques Crusteau. They visited Damascus and learned how God changed Saul to Paul. They visited Athens and heard why Paul wants us to worship the One True God. They stopped by Ephesus learned about baptism and played games. They spent an evening with Paul & in Silas in prison at Philippi and saw how God frees us. And finally they were shipwrecked with Paul on the island of Malta and were taught how God watches over us. At each of these places, they saw skits, played games, sung songs, built crafts, learned Bible stories, and had a good time.

But it couldn't have happened without your support. Thank you to all our teachers from both parishes. Thank you to our food preparers. Thank you to our set designers and decorators. Thank you to our guides, our musicians, our photographers, to our parents, and to everyone who helped out. And thank you God for giving us a wonderful week.

PS – In case you were wondering, our VBS offering for the week was \$233 to be given to life's true adventurers – our ELCA missionaries.



Bring Your Voices – Sr. Choir Returns

Raise a Loud Shout to God with Psalms as the Sr. Choir returns for its Fall season. We will start rehearsing on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 on September 16th (the Weds after the Jubilee).

Join us every Wednesday thereafter for some fun, sharing, and singing. No experience necessary. We'd love to have you.



Birthday Thank You

Thank you to everyone who participated in and sent well wishes on the happy occasion of my 40th Birthday. I was surprised and touched by your thoughtfulness. I am blessed to be a part of such a wonderful congregation and parish. It is truly a privilege to be your pastor.

Thank you to everyone who sent cards either to the parsonage or to the party. Thank you to everyone who provided food or other goodies for the meal – a special thanks to Pam for the Gob Cake. Yum ☺ Thank you to Marie for organizing everything. Thank you to Carol and family for decorating the fellowship hall in such a festive manner. Thank you to anyone who had a hand in this surprising event. It was a special day. I thank God for you all and for the gift of birthdays.



On the Horizon: Worship Happenings in September

September 6th – Sunday of the Syrophenician Woman/Health Care Sunday

In today's Gospel, Jesus journeys into Gentile territory and heals a child – the daughter of the Syrophenician woman. Beyond all the trappings of the story or the woman's clever reasoning, we ultimately see healing because of faith. The story shows us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings his or her need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir of God.

In the spirit of this welcome and healing, there will be a Rite of Healing during today's worship as well as a health-themed time of prayer, litany, and petitions.

September 13th – Jubilee Sunday/Holy Cross Sunday

On this day, we celebrate the Festival of the Cross, which celebrates the triumph of the cross. Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and salvation.

All are invited to join us either for the Jubilee Community Worship Service on the Jubilee grounds at 9am or at a parish worship service at Samuel's @10:30am (or both). (NO Worship at SP or M today)

September 20th – Sunday of the Welcome Child

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples the way to be great is to serve. Then, to make it concrete, he places in front of them an actual child. We are called to welcome all children that God puts in front of us.

Also today during worship, we will remember our own children and those who teach them as we have a Blessing of Teachers and Students to begin the new school year.

September 27th – Salt Sunday

Today Jesus reminds us to be like salt in our ministry – to proclaim the message that God has chosen the world in Christ and to allow that message to preserve and flavor everything around us.



Cover Me with Quilts – A Marathon

Calling all quilters, knotters, sewers, and anyone good with a needle from all our congregations. On **Wednesday, September 30th at Messiah**, the New Centerville Lutheran Parish will once again be holding a Quilting Marathon to add to our totals for the upcoming Blanket Sunday. We will **begin at 12N** and knot until whenever or until we run out of tops.



A Little Piece of the Saints – Bring Us the Fabric of your Loved One

I know it's a little early to be thinking about All Saints Sunday, but it is coming up in about two months. As we remember those who were significant to our faith life, we would like to invite anyone who has recently lost a loved one to bring in a piece of fabric (5' x 5') to be placed in our All Saints Banner @Messiah.

We are asking for this fabric so early so that we might have time to add it to the banner before All Saints Day. And so that on All Saints is might be on display with All Our Saints on Earth and Those Above.



ADULT BIBLE STUDY There's Wisdom in the Word – Summer Break

All are invited to come, pray, and study scripture as we continue to explore the Book of Faith. This month we are beginning a new topic - *“A Great Grand-ma to a King, a King-maker, a King and a Royal Pain”*, a study of Ruth, Samuel, David, and Elijah. This study explores peoples of faith in the Bible and their stories. In September, we examine the story of Ruth. Our Bible study meets on **Tuesday, September 22nd at 7pm** in the lounge at Messiah.



Jubilee Parade BBQ@M

It's never too early to start thinking about 2012 – the next National Youth Gathering. We have the potential to take 9-10 youth with us to the site of the next gathering. If that holds, we would need to double our fund raising from this time.

So on **Wednesday, September 9 at 5pm**, in an effort to begin raising funds for the next National Youth Gathering and also in an attempt reach out to the community, our Parish Youth Group will be

selling grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, chips, cookies, and drinks in the church parking lot during the time of the parade line up for all comers.

If you get hungry waiting for the parade to start, why not walk on over to Messiah's parking lot and purchase a snack or a meal.



OUR NEXT ADVENTURE WITH PAUL – THE JUBILEE PARADE

Once again, we will be entering a float in the Jubilee parade. We will be using some of our VBS decoration to show how God through Paul sends us out on adventures so that we can be neighbors helping neighbor.

We are looking for Parish members, young and adult, to walk behind and possibly ride our Jubilee Float. The parade will be on Wednesday, September 9th. Line up for the float begins around 6pm that night in the church parking lot.

(PS – the last two year's, our float has started down the Mud Pike at the big equipment shed.)

Before the parade, why not stop by our youth group's BBQ stand.

Worship Note: Here comes the Jubilee!

Jubilee Sunday is **September 13th**. This means a change in regular worship schedule. All are invited to the Jubilee grounds at 9am for a community worship service (Pastor Will is preaching at the Jubilee) OR you are invited to attend a parish worship service of Holy Communion at Samuel's at 10:30am. There will be no regular worship at Messiah or St. Paul's that day.



Where Did You See God this week!

Please share your stories with Pastor Will about where you saw God this week by email, bulletin insert, writing a letter, leaving a message on the voice mail, or in person. **Please continue share with me where you see God in your lives.**

Example: I saw God in the wonderful celebration, beautiful decorations, and delightful fellowship for my 40th birthday.

I saw God _____



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Once again, our parish will be preparing and sending shoe boxes filled with gifts for Operation Christmas Child. This year, we will be using a similar approach to previous years by asking for a certain item each week. The following is the schedule for donations.

AUGUST 30 – pens, pencils markers & crayons

SEPTEMBER 6 – Small Toys (Stuffed animal, toy car, ball, yoyo, etc)

SEPTEMBER 13 – Play Dough & Sunglasses

SEPTEMBER 20 – Ball Caps, T-Shirts, & Socks

SEPTEMBER 27 -- Solar Powered Calculators, Flashlights, Batteries, and Watches

OCTOBER 5- Coloring books, Crayons & Notepads

OCTOBER 11- Toothbrushes, combs & hair clips