

THE TIDINGS

News and Views from
Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**UNITED IN CHRIST, our mission is to GO out into the community,
SOW seeds of hopefulness, and GROW as loving disciples.**

COME BACK TO ME, WITH ALL YOUR HEART!



"We had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." Luke 15:32

Lent is a season of being invited by God in a deeply personal way. "Come back to me, with all of your heart," our Lord beckons. "We will," we respond, but we aren't quite ready yet, our hearts are not prepared. We want to squirm, evade, avoid. Our souls not yet perfect. We are not ready for God to love us. Yes, of course we want to have a deeper relationship with God, we tell ourselves earnestly. And we will...soon. God calls to us again: *Come back to me, with all of your heart.*

It is an extraordinary invitation to each one of us. God invites me to drop the defenses that I hold up between myself and God. All God wants is for me to realize that my standards, my way of judging and loving are so very different from God's way, and so much smaller. God offers an entire Lent season, an entire lifetime, of loving me unconditionally, no matter what I have done or how much I think I have hidden from God.

From the first day of Lent, the Ash Wednesday readings make God's call to us clear: "Return to me with your whole heart." "A clean heart create for me, O God," Psalm 51 offers. "Give me back the joy of your salvation." That is exactly what our loving God wants to give us, the joy of salvation.

Lent falls in winter and these days are cold and dark, perfect for hiding ourselves indoors, perfect for hiding from God - or so we imagine. But our God is insistent, loving, gently prodding. God is the parent of the Prodigal Child, waiting faithfully, eagerly on the road for our return, night after night. There are no folded arms and stern judging stares, only the straining eyes of a parent eager for our return, longing to embrace us and rejoice in us.

Yet we spend so much time trying to think of *how* to return and what to say, how to begin the conversation. It's only when we finally appear after so much time away, embarrassed and confused, that we understand we don't have to say anything. We only have to show up. Look up there on the road ahead of us: our loving God is jumping up and down for joy. The invitation to us has been heard. We have returned home!

But, wait... What stops us from this great reunion? What keeps us from accepting this invitation to something deeper in our lives with God? We feel in our hearts that there are things we should say first: "wait...but...if only" and finally, "If God really knew about me..." It doesn't matter. None of it matters. Only the joy that we have turned to God and that like a loving father or mother, God is smothering us with embraces and joyful cries. We have returned! *Come back to me, with all of your heart.*

Our acceptance of this call, this appeal to our hearts is simple if we can only get beyond the fear. All we have to do is say to our Lord, "I'm here. Where do I start? Yes, I want to be with you." Our hearts have been opened and we have taken the first step toward the rejoicing parent on the road. No explanations are necessary, only to pause and picture in our hearts the joyfully loving and unblinking gaze of God that falls on us.

What's the next step on our journey home? We could take the earliest moments of our day, before we have gotten out of bed to thank God for such a loving invitation and ask for help in opening our hearts to it. We could remember throughout the day the invitation that has moved our hearts: *Come back to me, with all of your heart.* And we can rejoice along with God. That is the invitation of each day of Lent. Today is the day to accept it.

From Co-Presidents Candy Goglin & Lin Hoyt

**At the January 2012 Council meeting it was agreed that we would try "collapsing" the President and Vice-President roles into that of "Co-presidents" for two reasons:*

- *To serve as model for the kind of communication and collaboration we seek in our life and ministry together as a congregation.*
- *To utilize the gifts of our present council more effectively.*

Co-presidents. The first thing the two of us had to decide was what being "co-presidents" meant for us. In a general aspect, it's pretty simple. We share the duties of council president. The next decision was how. That got a little more involved. There was one thing that kept coming to the forefront of our conversation. The need for communication.

If we are to share a leadership role within the congregation, we have to talk. We have to share our opinions and ideas. We have to work together to find solutions to any problems that might arise. We can't do it alone. Kind of sounds like a marriage, doesn't it? Throw the rest of council into the mix and you have something like a family. Add the rest of the congregation, and you have extended family. Ironic isn't it? We are a family. Brothers and sisters in Christ.

One of the most important things in a family is communication. If a husband and wife don't communicate, chances are the marriage won't last very long. If a family doesn't communicate, it ends up disjointed. Or should I say dysfunctional? Either way, communication is crucial in avoiding those difficulties.



As a family, Reformation has so much to offer. Look at our various ministries: the food pantry helping to give food to those in our area of the world that are in need, literally helping to keep them alive; the prayer shawls providing prayer, comfort, and encouragement to those who are struggling emotionally or physically; the quilting ministry which provides a tangible way for people to keep warm; the funeral luncheons which provide families that have lost a loved one a chance to spend time together, grieving or sharing memories, while they are fed without having to worry about preparation of the food or the clean up.

These are just a few of the examples of what our little congregation manages to accomplish. Each of these ministries work because of communication. Imagine how ineffective the food pantry would be if no one knew of its existence. We could make hundreds of prayer shawls only to have them take up space in a closet if people didn't let us know of someone in need of that kind of healing. The quilts communicate our willingness to give of ourselves, to help those that can't afford to buy a warm blanket. Without communication, the funeral luncheons simply wouldn't happen.

Communication is so important in doing the work of Christ. We will be making every effort to keep the lines of communication open in the year ahead. We hope that you will communicate with us as well. Let us know of your joys, concerns, hopes, and dreams. Communication is the key to keeping Reformation on a path that will keep us:

United in Christ, going out into the community to sow seeds of hopefulness and grow as loving disciples.

BAPTISMS

JANUARY

16 Richard Baker

FEBRUARY

03 Derek Baker
 14 Richard Damiani
 15 David Stewart
 16 Stephanie Saviano
 17 Kristen Fragassi
 19 Tara Stewart
 24 Frank Corrado III
 27 Kacy Baker
 28 Robert Ware

MARCH

11 Brandon Stewart
 15 Walt Strickland
 17 Brianna Kibler
 27 Jessica Hoyt
 27 Kellie Hoyt
 27 Carlie Dawson
 30 Ralph Davis
 30 Vicki Hartley

CELEBRATING EACH OTHER

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

01-02 Dixie Johnson
 01-05 Brianna Kibler
 01-07 Elizabeth Carroll
 01-09 Barb Strickland
 01-13 Fred Schwartz Jr.
 01-25 Jean Shriver
 01-27 Nora Davis
 01-31 Greg Stanton



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

02-01 Margaret Salajcik
 02-01 Richard Damiani Jr.
 02-06 David Ledenican, Jr.
 02-12 Lisa Miller
 02-12 Kali Miller
 02-14 Mia Goglin
 02-17 Fred Schwartz
 02-18 Kevin Miller
 02-18 Kaelee Drazdik
 02-20 Donna Vaughn
 02-22 Ethel Roth
 02-22 Teresa Gaeta
 02-27 Raymond Sphatt
 02-28 Susan Baker

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

02 Cindy Barnhart
 03 Michael Buchock
 05 Tom Grahek
 10 Susan Carroll
 13 Ruth Schwartz
 18 Nathan Goglin
 21 Sandy Blanchard
 25 Blake Davidson
 27 Elsie Bukovinski
 27 Frank Sam Corrao IV

***BIRTHDAY SUNDAYS
 JAN. 14 - FEB. 18 - MAR. 17***

ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY

John & Lois Sherlock
 1-30-1960

FEBRUARY

Richard & Margaret
 Salajcik
 2-11-1960

MARCH

Dale & Cindy Barnhart
 3-14-1958

RESOURCING OUR MISSION

Financial Snapshot

OCTOBER, 2011 Monthly Income

Envelope and Loose: \$ 6,753
 Total Income: \$ 8,368
 Total Expenses: \$ 8,529
 Total Unpaid Bills: \$ 139

NOVEMBER, 2011 Monthly Income

Envelope and Loose: \$ 5,681
 Total Income: \$ 7,133
 Total Expenses: \$ 7,527
 Total Unpaid Bills: \$ 0

DECEMBER, 2011 Monthly Income

Envelope and Loose: \$ 6,409
 Total Income: \$ 10,040
 Total Expenses: \$ 7,175
 Total Unpaid Bills: \$ 250

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER

- Living F.L.O.C.K. motorcycle outreach announced.
- Food Pantry / LCCN guidelines and procedures were discussed.

DECEMBER

- Our Treasurer is exploring options for investing with lower transaction fees.
- Four names were submitted for nomination to 2012 Council. A motion will be made at the Annual Meeting to accept all nominations.

JANUARY

- 2012 Officers & Liaisons chosen and will be installed 1-29-12.
- Thrivent acct was closed and money moved to Scottrade. Line item to be established for "Thrivent Choice Fund"
- Lent plans discussed, a Pulpit Exchange will be held 2-5 with Advent's Pastor Steve Bond.

**FOOD PANTRY
 ITEMS NEEDED**

February:

Fruit, Fruit Cocktail, &
 Applesauce

March:

Easter Basket
 Food Items

LENTEN WORSHIP

"We believe in ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC CHURCH." -Nicene Creed-



Each Wednesday evening in Lent we will gather at **5:30 p.m. for a soup supper** followed by worship at **6:30 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer**, led by Pat Deveny and Candy Goglin, will be the "format" for worship each evening. Join your brothers and sisters in Christ as we experience the healing melodies of this much loved vesper service.

Our theme for Lenten reflection will be the familiar phrase from the Nicene Creed quoted above. Each week will feature one of the five highlighted words and selected passages from the book of Ephesians.

- Feb. 29: ONE, Ephesians 2:13-15
- Mar. 7: HOLY, Ephesians 1:3-5
- Mar. 14: CATHOLIC, Ephesians 4:1-3
- Mar. 21: APOSTOLIC, Ephesians 4:10-12
- Mar. 28: CHURCH, Ephesians 4:4-6

Please join us as we "grow as loving disciples"!

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 22, 2012



Spaghetti Dinner Fellowship
@ 5:30 p.m.

Imposition of Ashes
and Holy Communion
@ 7:00 p.m.

Beginning February 12th

ADULT LEARNING HOUR (9:00 a.m.)

THE BOOK OF JOB

"Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest; but trouble comes."

Job 3: 25-26



The book of Job is a powerful story of deep faith in tragic times. In a larger sense it is the story of each of us who has ever tried to make sense of apparently senseless suffering. Difficult questions are raised by Job, including:

- Where is God in the worst moments of our emptiness?
- What are we to do when experience casts doubt on what we have always believed?
- Where in the world is justice?

We invite you to participate in an honest discussion of the connection between this ancient text and the world today. Together we can join in Job's search for hope and meaning.

"When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope."

Out of Solitude, Henri Nouwen