

THE GIFT

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DOING SHAPES BELIEVING

Not too long ago, bishops and other leaders from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) sat down with the bishops and leaders from the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (Episcopal Church). The ELCA individuals presented the Episcopal Church leaders with the “Book of Concord” (the tomb that contains the fundamental Lutheran theological statements) and asked the Episcopal Church bishops to present their “Book of Concord,” or collection of theological statements. The Episcopal Church bishops responded by presenting the ELCA bishops with the Episcopal Church hymnal, the “Book of Common Prayer.”

The ELCA and the Episcopal Church have many similar positions regarding the nature of the gospel, the purpose of the church, salvation, eternal life, and a great many other things. The two churches have come to many of the same conclusions, yet they have done it in almost completely opposite ways. While the members and leaders of the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies have spent many, many hours in serious, sober reflection and deliberation, conversation, study, and argument debating the finer points of theology, and have come up with some very

excellent theological, confessional statements and writings – the Episcopal

Church has instead paid much more attention to worship, prayer, and service.

That is not to say that members of the Episcopal Church do not argue and fight – they most certainly do. And it is not to say that members of the Episcopal Church don’t read, study or discuss theology – they most certainly do. But the Episcopal Church has been very intentional with something they refer to as “being the church.” What they mean by that is doing, and being involved with the various things that the church is supposed to be doing and involved in – prayer, worship, service to others and all of those sorts of activities – and allowing those experiences to form the core of their theology. The members of the Episcopal Church like to say that “Praying Shapes Believing,” that what you do informs what you believe.

Those are two drastically different methods of doing theology, and being Christians. On the one hand is the Lutheran method where people study, and discuss, and ponder, and hopefully eventually come to some sort of understanding that then leads them to service of the neighbor. It is a completely logical system. And on the

other hand – there is the Episcopal Church method, of going out into the world, behaving as Christians do, and allowing that to hopefully lead one to some theological understanding.

Now I am not going to say that one method is better than the other, they have yielded significantly similar theological convictions and insights. It seems to me that both methodologies are sound and valid, they just approach the Christian life from different places. What I do think, however, is that while we understand (and love) the traditionally Lutheran methodology, we can still use the Episcopal methodology to our benefit as well. - using a best of both worlds approach.

Often people tell me that they want to become “better Christians” have a more fulfilling spiritual life, or even have a better relationship with Jesus the Christ. The good news is that making all of these things happen are well within our abilities. In the next few weeks you will be hearing about discipleship meetings. These meetings will be an opportunity for members of the congregation to sit down with me one on one and intentionally discuss your spiritual life, your spiritual practices, what you would like your spiritual life to be, and ways to make that happen.

I look forward to meeting with all of you.

Long Live the King!

Pastor Andersen

BOAY BELIEVERS

David Msseemma spoke to members of St. John on Tuesday, May 20th, 2008 about their companion parish, the Boay parish in the Arusha Diocese of Tanzania. He talked and answered questions for more than 2 ½ hours.

The members of the Boay parish are mostly farmers, primarily raising corn, beans, and sunflowers. Their land isn't of good quality, but usually allows them to raise what they need to survive. They earn less than \$1.00 a day. HIV is a significant threat, as are other illnesses, because of water pollution and extreme poverty. The average life expectancy is approximately 50 years. The rural areas have no electricity, refrigeration, stoves, or showers like we have. Many people live in what we might call “huts.” Travel is slow during the rainy season because not many roads exist, and most of those that do exist turn to mud.

David is living with his extended family in Arusha, Tanzania and is trying to use stories to connect his father's first home in Tanzania and his motherland Chicago/northern Illinois. David's professional goal is to help partners, like St. John and the Boay congregation, better understand each other and make deeper connections. He is going back to Tanzania in July and will be taking a letter from St. John to personally deliver to Boay's Pastor Christopher Lukumay.

Please keep the Boay parish and people of Tanzania in your prayers. Pray for ways St. John can reach out and help our brothers and sisters of the Boay parish. For pictures and information, go to David's web site at www.lenana.net.

Submitted by Pat Townsend, St. John's historian.

SOCIAL STATISTICS

Our annual ice cream social held, Thursday, June 19, 2008, was a huge success. Once again, our church was complimented as having the "best" social in the area, with the largest variety of delicious food. This reputation developed over many years of hard work by so many individuals! It takes many people of all ages working together to accomplish this. Our oldest worker, Orville Klopf (86) and our youngest worker, Katie Eden (9) both helped the entire evening of the event. Galena Gazette personnel even made an appearance to check out the event for themselves!

We served 348 people and netted a profit of \$1,750.29. Our overall expenses had increased this year, as we all expected!

"Thank You" to everyone who helped in any way, especially to my committee chairpersons who made my job much easier. We can all be proud to have been a part of this memorable event.

Minnie Lieb, Chairperson

WITH GRATITUDE

The family of Karl Richard Hoffman wishes to thank everyone in the church that helped in any way with the memorial service and lunch. It helped our family to know that our church family was supporting us in this time of grief. Thanks again.

The family of Irene Endress wishes to thank her church family for remembering her with visits, cards, flowers, or other remembrances, and also to those who gave to the memorial. Thank you to Pastor for visiting Irene and to Kathy for her service music, providing a memorable funeral.

A big thank you to St. John for the monetary donations given for this year's Vacation Bible School. We used it toward the purchase of food to nourish the VBS families. A special thank you to Connie Carroll, Minnie Lieb, and Jen Johnson for their time and dedication given to the VBS kids.

Jim and Shirley Hoyer,
VBS Coordinators,
Elizabeth United
Methodist Church

CARES AND CONCERNS

Keep those prayers coming for the following individuals: Joy Hoffman, Ella Hoffman, the family of Irene Endress, Imogene Krahenbuehl, Dan Magee, Joe Dvorak Sr., Mary Lou Krohmer Shaw, Meredith Townsend, Jack Reel, Kevin Meiners, Warren Parker, Dan Koester, and the men and women serving in the armed forces.

PARADE POSSIBILITIES

How about reviving the small replica of St. John that is currently hiding in the storage barn? Individuals are needed to help clean up and repair the small church, if needed, for participation in some upcoming fall parades. Those who have equipment, or access to equipment, for transportation of the church would also be appreciated. If interested, see Pastor Andersen!

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Due to many requests to borrow church items, namely tables and chairs, a written policy has been devised and approved by council addressing this issue. Church members are allowed to borrow these items within the policy parameters identified. A binder will be located in the church kitchen with a copy of the policy and a sign-out sheet for those requesting future use of items belonging to St. John. Thanks for your cooperation!

AUGUST HELPING HANDS

	Lector	Acolyte	Greeters	Sacristan
August 3 rd	Laura Albrecht	Matthew Carroll	Calvin and Jan Klopf	Pam Staver
August 10 th	Daylon Scheele		Marv and Charlotte Blackbourn	Shirley Scheele
August 17 th	Sandy Andersen	Paige Paisley	Jody Carroll Family	Shirley Scheele
August 24 th	Allen Scheele		Ernie and Minnie Lieb	Shirley Scheele
August 31 st	Jess Albrecht	Matthew Carroll	Gloria Endress and Donna Albrecht	Connie Carroll

Ushers: Steve, Jake, Sam, and Tom Eden

Treasurer's Assistant: Vicki Wurster

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

- ◆ Pastor Andersen's book club on Thursday nights at 7:30 PM – topic is ELCA Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality
- ◆ Sign ups are located in the narthex to provide altar flowers and for refreshments on the second Sunday of each month
- ◆ Consider tithing when receiving your economic stimulus rebate check – donations will be given to local food pantries
- ◆ Recent council meeting minutes and treasurer's reports can be found in the "Council Meetings" folder located in the narthex
- ◆ Updates on prayer concerns are always appreciated
- ◆ Visit the church web site at www.stjohnmassbach.org