

# **THE GIFT**

**A Christian Publication by St. John Lutheran  
April, 2007**

## **THE GIFT:**

This month you may notice a new look and feel, to say nothing of a new title, to the newsletter. As you can read elsewhere in this newsletter, this has to do with a new set of editors taking over responsibility for newsletter assembly and publication.

The new title “The Gift” is the work of one of our new editors, and a sly reference to the unearned, undeserved, gift of eternal life given to us through salvation by our redeemer Jesus Christ. It is appropriate that the first edition of the new newsletter bearing this new name comes out this April, as we celebrate the gift of eternal life, and the resurrection of our Lord during the festival of Easter.

I think also that the title “The Gift” refers not only to the gift of eternal life, but to the gifts, the talents, skills, abilities, and interests that Christ has given each and every one of us in order that we might use those gifts in order to better serve Christ, and Christ’s kingdom.

While the unmerited gift of eternal life is central to our lives and to our faith as Christians, and cannot be discounted, I would also like to think that the title “The Gift” refers to more than just the gift of eternal life. I would like to also think that “The Gift” refers also to the way in which we, as Christians respond to the gift of eternal life. Not with callous disregard, or contemptuous passivity, or a guileful sense of entitlement, but rather graciously, and with thanks and reverence for the cost at which our Lord and Savior bought each and every one of us.

I would also like to think that “The Gift” might serve as a model for our response to the gift of eternal life in Christ. I would like to think that, in receiving such an invaluable gift we might be motivated, or stimulated, or even compelled to turn around and give the gift of our service to the God who has given us the gift of life. While that might sound somewhat ethereal and pie-in-the-sky, it is my hope that it can have a very real, and very concrete expression. Specifically it is my firm belief that we can serve the God we cannot see most effectively through serving the creatures and creation of God we can see; or to put it more bluntly, we can serve God most effectively by serving others, and being good stewards of God’s gift of creation.

So – while it may sound peculiar, changing the title of the newsletter to “The Gift” really does make a lot of sense – in a way encapsulating much of the Christian experience – responding to the gift of eternal life, by using our gifts, to offer the gift of our service.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Andersen

## **BULLETIN SWITCHES HANDS**

Thank you to Eileen Hughes for all the time and work done preparing our bulletins for Worship every week. Julie Yuswak is now our new contact person for bulletin information. Julie can be reached by phone at 815-244-1381 or via email at [myuswak@gallatinriver.net](mailto:myuswak@gallatinriver.net). Thank you to both Eileen and Julie!

## **HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS**



## **ST. JOHN SPONSORS CHARTER BUS**

There is a group of people going to "The Gaither Homecoming" Concert at the Mark of the Quad Cities on April 21<sup>st</sup>. There are still seats available on the bus. Cost is \$35.00 per person, which includes your concert ticket and charter bus. The bus departs from the Stockton Pool at 1:30 pm. The group will be eating at Ryan's Buffet in Moline and then going to the concert at 6:00 pm. Contact Pam Staver if you are interested at 815-947-2317. Thank you.

## **LENTEN OFFERINGS STAY LOCAL**

Our Lenten offerings this year will help to repay a loan for a handicap-accessible van for Rev. Ken Matthews at the United Presbyterian Church in Hanover. Rev. Matthews has only limited use of his legs due to a childhood illness. His mobility limitations have not kept him from his service to God's work. Please help us in supporting Rev. Matthews' ministry.

## **EASTER LILIES ADORN ALTAR**

Please sign up to purchase an Easter Lily in the church entryway. They are \$11.00 each. Money can be given to Minnie Lieb. Must be purchased by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **THE EGGS ARE ON**

Get ready for some piping hot egg casserole, freshly baked rolls, donuts, coffee cakes, juice, milk, and coffee on Easter morning! The sign-up sheet is in the church entryway for any donations. The Easter Sunrise breakfast is immediately following the Sunrise Service. Please come and eat and support those who have worked so hard to prepare for us! Thanks!

## **CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES**

Bus Trip on April 29<sup>th</sup> to Circa 21. Cost is \$53.00 per person. See Ken Eden if interested. Also, please congratulate Pat Townsend on an award winning casserole!

## **TRIATHLON/DUATHLON ON HORIZON**

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Galena triathlon/duathlon will be on Saturday, May 19, 2007. Our church family has been asked again to serve the food to the 1400 athletes and guests. Twenty-five people are needed to serve the food. Please sign up if you are able to help. It's lots of fun! Any questions, contact either Charlotte or Marvin Blackburn.

## **COFFEE TALK**

Don't forget to purchase a new 150<sup>th</sup> sesquicentennial mug for only \$5! They can be used endlessly, as they are both microwave and dishwasher safe! See Daylon Scheele for details.

## EASTER MESSAGE 2007



Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

"They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. ? Then they remembered his words." (NRSV Luke 24:2,8)

On the first Easter morning, the women entered an empty tomb expecting to find Jesus. They were looking for the body of Jesus, but were disappointed and perplexed.

Today, when we look for peace and there is no peace, we, too, may wonder where Jesus is. When violence and wars escalate, we may wonder where Jesus is. When hunger and poverty continue to have a stronghold in neighborhoods here and around the world, we may wonder where Jesus is. When we experience the emptiness of the divisions among races, religions, and classes, our fear and confusion can cause us to wonder where Jesus is. When we struggle with guilt or shame, we may wonder where Jesus is. Like the disciples of old, we miss the signs of God's presence in our world.

In the dark days of perplexity and despair for the troubles of this world, let us remember the hope of Easter morning.

In the dawn of Christ's resurrection, we rejoice that death and evil did not have the last word: the tomb is empty! Christ is with us, living among us and through us, announcing "good news to the poor ? release to the captives ?

recovery of sight to the blind," freedom to the oppressed, and "the year of the Lord's favor." (NRSV, Luke 4:18-19) Christ is with us as the word of forgiveness is declared and the sacraments are received. Christ is with us as we look for signs of Jesus in our churches and communities and remember his words: "And, remember I am with you always, to the end of the age." (NRSV, Matthew 28:20b)

### **KEEP PRAYING....**

The Family of Rick Snodgrass, Joann Wand family, Robert Hickman, Cletus Eden, Robert & Jeanette Yeager, The Woolcook family, Ron Beyer, John Haas, Warren Bailey, Allison Hillen, Kyle Ege, David Craig, The family of LeRoy Beyer, LuAnn Jordan, Joan Bonvillain, Sarah Zach, Raymond Steffes, David Knauer, Marlow Townsend, Dan Koester, Sam Albrecht, and all serving in our world's armed forces.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Many thanks for all the cards, flowers, gifts, prayers or other ways you remembered us on our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We had a great day!

Donald and Myra Krug

Thanks to Charlotte Blackburn and the ladies of Massbach Lutheran Church for providing the food for the Red Cross Blood Drive. Also, thank you for working in the kitchen and making sure the day ran smoothly. We greatly appreciate it!

Millie Graves,  
Blood Drive Coordinator

## MEET YOUR NEW EDITORS!

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- A giraffe can clean its ears with its 50 cm tongue
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth
- The earth is not round; it is slightly pear-shaped; the North Pole radius is 44 millimeters longer than the South Pole radius

## GERMAN, ANYONE?

Thanks to the time spent by Calvin Klopff in researching, we now have written records of baptisms performed dating back to approximately 1857! Most of the records are in German, however! Calvin will make these records accessible in the church entryway and people are welcome to make copies, or just enjoy looking through some valuable memorabilia! Thanks Calvin!

## KEEPING ABREAST

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Copies of the recent Council Meeting minutes will be available in the church entryway for those interested.

## PASTOR ANDERSEN

If Pastor Andersen is needed urgently, you may call him at 815-713-9341. All other calls should go to the church office at 815-598-3367. Please keep him informed of necessary information to make hospital calls or other visits. Thank you!

## PRAISE BE TO GOD!

Allison Hillen, cousin of the Lieb family, is doing remarkably well following her liver, pancreas, and small intestine transplant! She has been taken off a central line feeding tube for the first time in her 23 years of life! She has also been discharged from the hospital and is working toward finishing her Bachelor's Degree as a Counselor for hospitalized children. Allison faces a lifetime chance of organ rejection however so far is doing great! She thanks all of you for your prayers and support!

## **ABBRA KADABBRA!**

Make the hymnals disappear! You may have noticed recently that our pews have a LOT of hymnals in them. Three sets to be exact! We have the shiny new red hymnals, “Evangelical Lutheran Worship,” the trusty blue hymnals “With One Voice,” and the green hymnals “Lutheran Book of Worship.” While it is a blessing to have as many resources as we do, there is also a certain amount of redundancy, and the obvious truth is that our pews runneth over. We simply have too many hymnals. Because Evangelical Lutheran Worship contains almost everything the Lutheran Book of Worship does (and many things LBW does not) and because Evangelical Lutheran Worship is now the standard worship text for the ELCA, the church council has decided that it is time for the Lutheran Book of Worship to be retired.

In order for all of our copies of the Lutheran Book of Worship to find good homes, we are inviting members to take copies of the green hymnals home with them beginning Easter Sunday, for members to use for their own devotions, or just to remember fondly. The copies that are left at the end of Easter will be donated to a local nursing home, or other similar facility, for use by the residents to aid in their worship and devotion. In any event, the church will be keeping at least 5 copies of the trusty old hymnal for future reference and historical purposes.

## **THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE**

Several years ago, a young girl named Liza was suffering from a disease and needed a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother. He had miraculously survived the same disease and had the antibodies that his sister now needed.

The doctor asked the boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. He hesitated just a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, “Yes, I’ll do it if it will save Liza.”

As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled. He was pleased to see the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, “Will I start to die right away?”

Being young, the boy had misunderstood the doctor. He thought he was going to have to give her all of his blood.

# **HAVE A GREAT MONTH!**