

# **THE GIFT**

A Christian Publication by St. John Lutheran  
May 2007

## **EASTER BLISS**

As we celebrate the season of Easter, we are reminded, perhaps more regularly, and most saliently during the church year, of our salvation and the promise of resurrection and eternal life, shown to us so clearly in the empty tomb.

Many American Christians, including all too many Lutherans, believe that that there is something that one must do in order to be saved, in order to enjoy that promise of resurrection. Some will suggest that there are a litany of things one must do in order to be sanctified, some will suggest that certain rituals must be performed, and still others will make a work out of belief itself, suggesting that belief is something that we do rather than something the Holy Spirit works in us.

Those positions, however, cannot be maintained in light of the Easter Story, in light of the empty tomb. The scripture does not record that the apostles performed some miraculous feat in order to bring Christ back, or that Christ returned after the apostles had ended hunger, or that they even went to the temple to pray. The scripture records that Peter denied Christ 3 times, that the disciples hid out and tried to keep their heads down, and not be rounded up and similarly executed. And the tomb was empty just the same. The Easter story makes it clear that our salvation is not something that we help with, or even participate in – that it is exclusively the work of Christ.

But we are also reminded that Christ DID commend Christians to go and to serve. And so we are left to wonder why. It is clear that our salvation is not based upon our own activity. So why, then, would we want to expend effort, time, and resources in service to other people, many of whom we don't even know? What do we get out of it? Sure, we were commanded to do it, but we are commanded to do lots of things. For most folks, a command is simply not motivation enough and it certainly is not particularly exciting. "I'm just following orders" has never been a particularly moving excuse, or a satisfying motivation.

The question at its root is this: Why do we, as Christians, engage in ministry and service to the world? We do it for at least two reasons. First, we do it out of thankfulness. We do it because we have been given the gift of salvation, and just like when someone brings a person a gift, it inspires a desire to respond.

## **EASTER BLISS, CONT.**

Yet another reason we spend our time and our resources in the service of Christ is to make the Kingdom of God present here. We do it to make this world better, to have an impact on the world, to make the world a better place, not only for those who live here now, but for those who will live here tomorrow as well.

That is the power of the Easter message – both salvation and mission so intimately linked that it is easy to get them confused; but easy to keep straight when we think of our salvation, not as something we earn for ourselves, but as something that frees us to serve others. That certainly is bliss.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Andersen

### **AN ARTIST IN THE MIDST....**

Special thanks goes out to Donna Albrecht for designing the church artwork on the cover of this publication. What a wonderful talent!

### **CONGRATS, CONFIRMAN DS**

On Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, Kyle Baltierra and Jacob Eden will be confirming their faith at Christ Lutheran Church in Stockton. Please congratulate them on their accomplishments.

### **THE WHEELS ON THE BUS....**

The Bus trip to the Bill Gaither Homecoming concert was great! Thank you to the 6 people who were able to go to represent our congregation: Marlin & Sharon Eden, Ernie & Minnie Lieb, Helen Muto, and Pam Staver. We had 49 passengers total....coming from Stockton, Lena, Apple River, Shannon, Lanark, Savanna, Freeport, and Fulton. It was a spiritually uplifting experience for all of us! The group has a blind piano player who wrote a song to his wife, "Seeing you through my eyes," which he sang and played that evening. There was also one of their musicians who had recently undergone chemotherapy for breast cancer and she was there to sing and tell about it. The whole evening was very rewarding and full of emotion. THANK YOU, St. John, for sponsoring this event!

Pam Staver

### **ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A RIVER RIDGE STUDENT?**

Congratulations to the recent River Ridge Honor Roll students: Laura Albrecht, Jacob Guenzler, Sam Albrecht, Sarah Guenzler, Matthew Carroll, and Jessie Albrecht. Keep up the good work!

## **TIME TO FIRE UP THE GRILL!**

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.

## **IN APPRECIATION...**

Thank you for your prayers and uplifting words of encouragement during my recent adventure with breast cancer. I have felt exceptionally well throughout this entire ordeal because so many wonderful people like yourselves have been praying for me. Out of deep gratitude, I invite you to my home for an open house on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> so that I can have the pleasure and opportunity to thank you in person. Please come anytime after 4:00 pm.

LuAnn Jordan, 2986 North Kent Road, 815-369-4052.

## **OUR PRAYERS GO OUT TO...**

The family of Jeremiah Magee, Donna Wurster, Dennis Ulicny, Donna DeMoss, Bailey McMannus, Robert Hickman, Cletus Eden, Robert & Jeanette Yeager, The Woolcook family, John Haas, Warren Dailey, Kyle Ege, David Craig, LuAnn Jordan, Joan Bonvillain, Raymond Steffes, David Knauer, Marlow Townsend, Dan Koester, and all serving in our world's armed forces.

## **DRINK UP!**

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.

## **CAN HE FIX IT? YES HE CAN!**

The Flower Committee would like to extend a special thank you to Marv Blackburn for repairing and painting the Lily Cross. It was much appreciated!

## **MANY THANKS!**

Thank you for the cards, prayers, visits, gifts, phone calls and concern, also to Pastor for his visits and communion, as I mend from my fall on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Two broken legs slow you down to zero. I miss church and seeing all you good people. It will be weeks yet before I'm released. I just wanted you folks to know how much we appreciated everything. God Bless and watch over you.

Raymond and Florence Steffes

## THE NUMBERS ARE IN...

2007 Stockton Expo:

Income:

Total Sales	3032.38
Cash Donations	83.00
Sakle of Cans	10.40
Stockton Chamber	
Use of Tables	450.00
Coffee & Rolls	62.50
Sam Albrecht Donation	75.00
Thrivent Matching Funds	250.00

Total Income 4213.28

Expenses:

Start up Cash	300.00
Food, Supplies, Etc.	806.72
Ege, Craig, Albrecht	
Donations	825.00

Net Profit 2251.56

## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

“Happy Mothers Day” means more  
Than have a happy day.  
Within those words lie lots of things  
We never get to say.

It means I love you first of all,  
Then thanks for all you do.  
It means you mean a lot to me,  
And that I honor you.

But most of all, I guess it means  
That I am thinking of  
Your happiness on this, your day,  
With pleasure and with love.

## SUGGESTIONS? CONTACT ONE OF YOUR EDITORS!

Pastor Andersen  
815-598-3367

[PASTOR@STJOHNMASSBACH.  
ORG](mailto:PASTOR@STJOHNMASSBACH.ORG)

Pam Staver  
815-947-2317

[STAVER4@JISP.NET](mailto:STAVER4@JISP.NET)

Jen Johnson  
815-947-6014

[JENBUG32@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:JENBUG32@HOTMAIL.COM)

## LET'S KEEP OUR MINDS SHARP!

- The Earth is slowing down. In a few million years there won't be a leap year.
- A crocodile's tongue is attached to the roof of its mouth and cannot move it.
- If all of your DNA was stretched out, it would reach the moon 6,000 times.
- Chewing gum while peeling onions will keep you from crying.
- On ostrich egg can make 11 ½ omelets.
- The most productive day of the workweek is Tuesday.

**UPDATES,  
ANYONE?**

Help us stay updated in regards to the individuals and families on our prayer list! Anyone having information, please notify Pam Staver or Jen Johnson so that we can communicate this in our monthly newsletter. Thanks!

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDARS!**

The time is fast approaching! Don't forget to reserve Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup> as a day of celebration! The 150<sup>th</sup> committee is working hard to plan a wonderful day full of fun and entertainment!

**BULLETIN  
BOARDS  
RECEIVE  
FACELIFT!**

Take a moment to venture downstairs and look at the newly decorated bulletin boards! Thanks to Vicki Wurster for taking the time to add new luster and energy to the basement!

**HAVE A GREAT MONTH!**