

THE GIFT

**A CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION BY ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN**

WWW.STJOHNMASSBACH.ORG

OCTOBER 2008

ADULTFIRMATION!

Do you remember everything you should from confirmation? Do you know everything you would like about how to study and interpret the scripture? Well if not, you are in luck!

The confirmation class this semester will be focused on how Lutherans interpret scripture. This may be significantly different from some of the bible studies that you have experienced before, in that we will not be exploring “what the bible says” but rather we will be exploring the processes by which we go about interpreting the scripture.

Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write a language, and most people in the United States are in fact literate. Most Americans can read and write, most of them in English. Most Americans cannot recite long portions of Shakespeare and modern Americans may

not catch all of the time period specific humor of Mark Twain, but they are still literate. Literacy means that a person understands and is able to use the parts of a language – not that a person knows everything that has ever been written or said in a language.

For years, clergy and other church leaders have been lamenting the lack of what we call “biblical literacy” in the church – but what we really mean is that we lament the lack of biblical literacy among lay people. What we mean when we say “biblical literacy” is the skill set needed to faithfully interpret the scripture. That is not to say that most pastors wish that more people knew more scripture passages by heart, or that more people knew the “correct” interpretations of various passages. I, for one, am equally troubled by the person who has memorized long portions of the

scripture, but has given little thought to what they mean, as I am by the person who believes he knows the “correct” interpretation of various passages (and also believes that that there is only one correct interpretation), as I am by the person who never opens her bible except when prompted to in worship. Biblical literacy is no more about memorizing a bunch of biblical facts than English literacy is about memorizing Shakespeare.

Fortunately, at the 2007 church wide assembly, this very issue was addressed and the ELCA began work on what is being called “The Book of Faith Initiative.” The goal of the initiative is to make the whole church more “fluent,” or dare I say it, more “literate”, “...in the first language of faith, the language of scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as people renewed enlivened,

empowered and sent by the word." A big part of this initiative is a set of resources, the first of which have been completed and made available to the church. I am very impressed with what I have seen so far. While I had originally planned on doing something a little different, given the quality of the new resources, I have decided to use them, in conjunction with a few other resources, for the confirmation program this semester.

Now if you have been reading, and wondering

what this has to do with you, or why you are so lucky – here it is: This semester I am opening the confirmation class to adults. If you are interested in becoming more biblically literate, or fluent, if you are interested in learning something more about biblical interpretation, this is a great opportunity for you.

Classes will meet at 7:30 PM Wednesday evenings every week of the month except the third; starting October 8th. You do not need to attend every class (unless you are hoping to be confirmed) but the more

classes you attend the more you will learn. The classes will involve a video presentation, and then some time for conversation about the video in addition to a variety of other activities.

You will find a sign up sheet in the narthex. If you are interested in participating this semester, please sign up so I know how many for which to plan.

Long Live The King!
Pastor Andersen

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES

When he was president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Gordon MacDonald said, "One of the greatest teachings missing in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us."

We own nothing. We have been given material means to use, but not to own. All that we have belongs to God. He is our Source according to Psalm 62:5. We are only managers and stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

Because all that we have belongs to God, and because He gives us the ability to obtain wealth, every spending decision is in reality a spiritual decision. According to 1 Corinthians 10:31, our constant goal must be to glorify God in all of life, including how we use His resources.

Stephen Olford wrote this: ". . . man's chief end is 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' We are to glorify God by our worshipful praise (Psalm 50:23). We are to glorify Him by our consistent fruitbearing (John 15:8). We are to glorify Him by our spiritual unity (Rom. 15:6). We are to glorify Him by our entire dedication (1 Cor. 6:20). And we are to glorify Him by our good works (Matt. 5:16). In this last category is included the matter of giving. Only in this way can we provide for 'honest things in the sight of the Lord.' The glory of God should motivate us to give and to give our best."

If our goals and ambitions are truly set on spiritual things, if our emphasis in life is to glorify God, we will use the funds He has "loaned" to us on a temporary basis to glorify Him. We will put His money and possessions to good use by giving to His work and by storing up "treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:19-21).

There are two key questions to be asked concerning money and possessions: First, are you glorifying God in how you are using the money and possessions He has entrusted to you? And second, are you viewing these things as yours or as His?

FEED MY SHEEP!

A month or so ago, many of our folks spent an afternoon in Dubuque preparing and serving food to some folks who rely on the kindness of strangers for a meal. The experience was a good one for all involved - certainly the people eating, but also for those serving.

We have been invited back to serve in a similar capacity, but this time on a regular basis. Starting in October, we will be serving at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Dubuque, IA on the last Saturday of the month. Please sign up in the narthex!

See Pastor Andersen if you have any other questions.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Trinity Lutheran Church in Milledgeville, IL is having their Annual Fall Bazaar on Saturday, October 18, 2008. Brunch will be served from 9 AM to noon and will include: egg casserole, fresh fruit, muffins, coffeecake, yeast rolls, juice, and coffee. A bake sale will also take place along with a raffle for a quilt, placemat set, and homemade desserts. Cost is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children 5-10 years, and children 4 and under are free! No tickets necessary, carry outs available. See flyer in narthex for more details!

PRAYER CONCERNS

Ella Hoffman, 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 world's armed forces

BAKED GOODS AND MORE!

It is once again time to begin preparing for the Hanover All Church Bazaar! Let's try to spice up our display this year by adding other items in addition to the fantastic baked goods! Any ideas? Contact Julie Yuswak. Thanks to everyone who has helped out with this event in the past and look forward to the help of several volunteers again this year!

TIME FOR THANKS

St. John Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Stockton Food Pantry, thank you for your donation of \$325.00. More and more people have been seeking help from the food pantry over the last few months. Because of this, we are very thankful for all donations of money or food items.

Thanks again and God Bless!
Sincerely,
Irma Zueger, Food Pantry Coordinator

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A big thank you for your check for our Elizabeth food pantry!

Sincerely,
Jack and Jeanette Graves, Food Pantry Coordinators

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Dear Friend of Hospice,

We thank you for your donation to our Hospice. It is gifts such as yours that assist our volunteers in the ways that will add to the comfort and quality of life for the client and their family.

We never charge the client, the family, their insurance or Medicare/Medicaid for our services. We are strictly an all-volunteer, "Neighbor helping Neighbor" organization and we operate on donations, memorials, and various fund raising activities. It is a very special kind of caring and you help us continue this service.

Sincerely,
Judy Hammer, Office Volunteer

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Dear Pastor and members,

Lutheran Services in Iowa thanks you for your response to the needs of the victims in the Iowa communities affected by recent natural disasters. The devastation and destruction that has occurred across the state has created an extraordinary need for thousands of Iowans. Your gift of 39 quilts, 6 afghans, a comforter, and 6 stuffed animals will be greatly appreciated.

The lives of so many have been changed forever by the historic floods that have ravaged so many communities and the powerful tornado that carved a path through the northeast part of the

state, taking with it homes and lives. To assist the people of these areas, LDI, the Iowa affiliate of Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), is providing services on a long-term basis to victims of the recent storms. This response program is designed to address the unmet needs of residents and supports the community long after the cleanup phase is completed. In addition to support from an assigned case advocate, typical assistance may include purchasing a bed or other household items, paying an insurance deductible, paying a utility bill, or addressing a wide range of uninsured or underinsured financial losses.

Thank you for your important support of LSI’s disaster response program and for acting on our mission of “responding to the love of Jesus Christ through acts of service to all.” Your gift lifts up your neighbors as they face the aftermath of the devastation, destruction and unfathomable loss.

Sincerely,
 Kaye M. Gnglin, VP of Advancement and Church Relations

Visit our website at www.Isiowa.org and learn how your contribution is helping Iowans in need!

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Thank you to my church family for all the cards, phone calls, and prayers during my recent surgeries and chemotherapy treatments. I am back to work and feeling good! God bless you all!

Mary Krohmer Shaw

OCTOBER VOLUNTEERS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Lector</i>	<i>Acolyte</i>	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Sacristan</i>
October 5 th	Connie Carroll	Paige Paisley	Pam Staver and Joan Beyer	Joan Beyer
October 12 th	Pam Staver		Calvin and Jan Klopff	Connie Carroll
October 19 th	Julie Yuswak	Matthew Carroll	Marvin and Charlotte Blackburn	Marilee Hejna
October 26 th	Calvin Klopff		Jody Carroll Family	Cindy Paisley

Ushers: Daylon Scheele, Allen Scheele, Calvin Klopff, Ernie Lieb
Treasurer’s Assistant: Marilee Hejna
Sunday School Teachers: Pam Staver, JoAnn Eden, Jen Johnson

MISSION MATTERS

Mission Sunday will be held on Sunday, October 5th. The Rev. Dr. Nathan Frambach, Associate Professor for Youth, Culture, and Mission at Wartburg Seminary, will speak in worship. There will also be a forum following worship. Help support Nathan by attending both!

GET INVOLVED!

Take advantage of what is offered! Sign up in the narthex for any or all of the following:

- ❑ Pastor Andersen's Book Club – Changing Lenses by Howard Zehr will be read and discussed on Thursday nights at 7:30 PM. Cost is \$10.
- ❑ Adultfirmation – Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM.
- ❑ Discipleship Meetings – pick a time that works for you!
- ❑ Serving at Soup Kitchen – last Saturday of the month in Dubuque, IA.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

- ✓ Worship time will change to 9:30 AM starting Sunday, October 5th with Sunday School following.
- ✓ Fall clean-up day will be Saturday, October 4th, starting at 9 AM.
- ✓ Pastor Andersen has updated the church web site. Check it out at www.stjohnmassbach.org.
- ✓ It's not too late to donate some economic stimulus rebate money to the local food pantries! Just indicate so on your offering envelope.

"SPOOKTACULAR" TIME

Plans are in the midst for an upcoming Halloween party to be held at the church for kids of all ages! If you are interested in donating your time, resources, or both, see Jen Johnson. More information coming soon!

HAVE A GREAT MONTH!