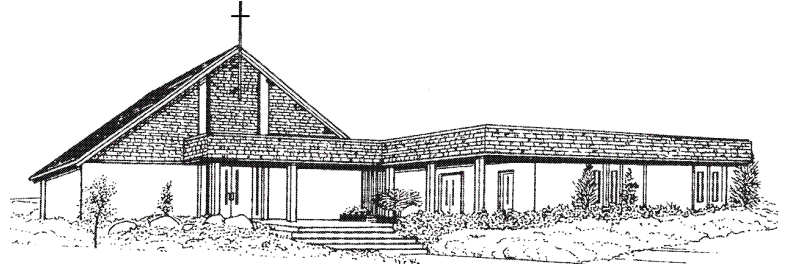


October 2011

Volume 9, Issue 8



The Reporter



Recognizing Our Mission

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A number of years ago we developed a statement of mission. Its purpose was to focus our attention on why the Lord has placed us here and what we need to be doing. It appears every month on the cover of the newsletter. It also appears on different pieces of literature published by our congregation. It is a simple statement. We have actually pared it down to three words. They are important because they are a regular reminder of our life in Christ, and what we have because of his undeserved love.

Over the course of the next three months each part of our mission statement will be reviewed. While it may seem unnecessary, even redundant, it is not without benefit. For those who understand it and put it into practice, it will be a good reminder and serve as an encouragement to continue doing the “good work already begun.” For those who are uncertain or may not recognize what our mission statement means, the review will provide a beneficial opportunity to review your life of loving service, and recommit yourself to the Lord.

The three parts of our mission statement are drawn directly from specific passages from the Bible. These are:

“But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:18

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us **encourage** one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

“We **proclaim** to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ”

1 John 1:3

Within each of these verses our mission statement is clearly recognizable as grow, encourage and proclaim. This month we will focus on the Lord’s encouragement to grow.

It is easy to look around the worship service on Sunday morning and wonder, “why aren’t we growing?” It is just as easy to direct criticism at the Elders, the Outreach Committee, and even the Pastor. “Why aren’t they doing their job better!” There is a kernel of truth to the criticism, and each of the aforementioned groups will agree they could be more doing more and be more effective. Still their service is only part of the

Continued on page 2

Growth, from page 1

equation. Growth actually includes a number of facets. This is why the Lord's definition of growth needs to be considered - "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Growth according to the Lord's standard is measured in two ways. The first is "growth in grace." This is an increasing appreciation of what God the Father has done for each of us through his Son. God's grace, namely his undeserved love, is seen in Jesus' life and death, as well as his resurrection and his continuing work as our Mediator and Master. The question I need to ask is, "Have I grown in this grace?"

In order to determine growth I need to use the Lord's standard of measurement. Growth in God's grace is accomplished through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. So one way to measure my growth is by my contact with what God has provided for my growth. According to God's standard, if I am sporadic in my attendance at the Lord's Table, or if I am distracted from regular weekly worship, what does this say about my desire to grow in God's grace? Can I expect to grow if I don't take advantage of the means he offers?

There is an old proverb which states, "fruit doesn't lie." If my actions and attitude do not reflect a desire to grow in God's grace, what am I actually saying? If the "fruit" produced by my life reveals, "it is not that important for me to schedule my life around the opportunity to receive the Means of Grace," how do I justify this with what the Lord says in his commandments: "love me with all your heart, soul and strength?" I may think I have a good reason, but what reason is sufficient to put the Lord second in my life? How can I expect to grow in God's grace if I remain away from it?

The other way in which growth is measured is in the "knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." Take a moment for some honest reflection. Since your confirmation have you grown in your knowledge? It is one thing to grow in life experience. It is another thing to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Knowledge is an important part of our life. Without knowledge we would never move forward, make valuable changes, or, for that matter, grow. It has been said, the day I stop learning is the day I am dead. In a way it is impossible not to learn. We are always learning either good practices or bad habits.

While each of us wants and needs to learn more to stay relevant in a quickly changing world, do we make the same commitment to grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is clear, Satan is constantly changing his schemes and attacks. Are we up to that challenge? Can we accurately identify them when they come?

If one would look simply at the statistics within our congregation, it is sobering to see one in nine of our communicant members attends a regularly scheduled Bible Study. If you have been following the series in the News-Press on poverty and starvation, it has been deemed a crisis because one in eight people are either starving or in poverty.

Let's put the statistics aside and ask more practical questions. Am I aware of the intricacies of the devil's temptations? Am I confident of all the Lord's promises? Am I aware of the importance of my baptism to provide comfort and strength? Am I certain of what is mine because of Jesus' resurrection? If there is the smallest doubt, or even the least little bit of uncertainty, the devil rushes in and grabs hold of it. The only sure way to identify and overcome the attack is through growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Without a doubt, this includes daily private study. On the other hand, we can not exclude corporate study - time together with our brothers and sisters in the faith. There is much to be gained from the experience of others. Why not draw on such a ready and reliable source of knowledge.

Growth in God's Word is one of the key distinguishing characteristics of a Lutheran, and even more important, a Christian. Luther writes:

"True it is that in this life the devil incessantly seeks and tempts us. In addition, the world incessantly lures

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Growth, from page 2

and draws us to itself; and, apart from this, our own flesh is slow and sleepy in service to God. These three enemies grant us no rest; everyone draws us to his way of living in order to make sure that we forget God. To combat them we have nothing but God's Word. With it we defend and exercise ourselves in the truth faith against these three powerful enemies. But God assures us that we shall fare well and meet with success if we diligently read, hear, speak, and keep his Word. This means that we shall win through the Word.

What Luther Says, page 1492, paragraph 4821

It is equally important to remember, if we ignore or neglect any of the blessings the Lord gives through his Word, he will withdraw those blessings and take them to a place and people who will receive them with joy. So there is much at stake, individually and as a congregation. Literally, we hold our future in our hands. That future could be described in either of two ways. One would be the Athenians who listened to Paul, concluded he was interesting, then promptly went on to something else. The other would be the Bereans, who listened to Paul, compared what he said to the rest of Scripture, then promptly put his teaching into practice. Whose future was brighter and filled with the hope of eternal life?

Each of us made a promise on the day of our Confirmations to continue in a "lifetime of study at the feet of our Savior." We also made the solemn promise to "remain faithful in all things, and even suffer death, rather than fall away." Have we been faithful to our word? Have we pursued that lifetime of learning? Have we allowed our grip on the Word to slowly diminish? While we must confess with shame our guilt, we also know our Savior will forgive us. He will even change our lives to put him and his Word first, and above all things.

Certainly we have many choices to consider in our life, and we recognize some of those choices will cause probably conflicts. We also need to remember every choice we make has consequences - temporal and eternal. Consider each one prayerfully, then make your first choice to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Next month we will look at the second part of our mission statement, encourage.



We rejoice in the many blessings our Lord continues to give to the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless all richly.

- 2nd — Greg G.
- 4th — Kyle K.
- 6th — Deborah P.
- 8th — Erle P.
- 13th — Natalie K.
David G.
- 17th — George H.
- 22nd — Valerie C.
- 23rd — Darby J.
- 25th — Michelle J.
- 30th — Tamara S.

in the month of OCTOBER

Festival of Friendship

Good Friends, Good Food, and a Gracious God!

On Sunday, October 16th, we will have our Festival of Friendship. Although it is a month later than normal, we thought we would try this date. One significant consideration was the weather in September can be unseasonable foggy and cool. If you think back about two years, we had to move inside for the service. Granted, October may have a few questionable days as well - weather wise that is.

We will gather "Under the Oaks" for the 10:30 am service. Please note the change in time. Since it is a more casual atmosphere and a later time, it makes it perfect for inviting friends, neighbors, and relatives who need to know Jesus. Following the worship service we will also have our tri-tip barbeque.

As always we will need help. Here are some of the areas where extra hands are important --

- Set-up of chairs prior to the service
- Set-up of tables after the worship service
- Clean-up of tables and chairs when everything is complete
- Follow up on visitors
 - * writing thank you cards
 - * making personal visits

We also need everyone to bring along a dessert. If you would rather bring a side dish, that would be welcome too. Remember, the tri-tip, garlic bread, salad, beans, and drinks are provided.

If you are planning to attend, and if you are bringing someone with you, please let Pastor Proeber know prior to Friday, October 14th so we can plan enough food.

Festival of Friendship & Worship under the Oaks

October 16th at 10:30 am
Barbeque and fellowship following

Guests are WELCOME!

Reporters Wanted!

Book review?

Personal Story of Faith

Event Reports Potluck, Gathering, Party, Field Trip

Half-page to three pages

Reviewed for scriptural consistency and readability by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler (cfs_home@hotmail.com) or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Alan Todd and Carl Schueler for their articles. *The Reporter* continues to benefit from a variety of perspectives, and this issue again contains material from volunteer "reporters."

There is always an open invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past, member-authored articles have made every issue more interesting. These included articles on a wide variety of subjects: ORLC news, past and planned events, thought-provoking instructional articles on WELS history and other religions, and articles relating to personal perspectives on our faith in Jesus.

We pray that more members will continue to think about possible articles for the remainder of 2011. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25 NIV

Meetings for October

October 4th - Church Council at 7:00 pm

October 9th - Congregational Quarterly

Meeting with Council Elections

October 11th - Board of Education at 7:00 pm

October 15th - Outreach meeting at 10:00

October 25th - Board of Trustees

Keeping Jesus Out of the Church

Normally I don't spend a great deal of time reading emails from senders who are not well known, however, this one caught my attention and made for some thought-provoking reading. Its title should do the same for you.

Your initial impression might be the same as mine after reading the article, "Who in their right mind would do this?" There are those, however, who believe modern Christianity has to rely on "secular humanism" to make it more attractive. For people who believe this, it is clear they do not want Jesus in their church. You and I need to be aware the same temptation confronts us. When we compromise the teaching of God's Word, or when we modify it to make it sound more palatable, we are doing exactly the same thing - putting Jesus out of the church. Daily we need to pray, "Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word!"

7 Reasons Why Jesus Must be Kept out of the Church Today

1. Because he taught that there was an actual and eternal hell, and that those who reject him would be sentenced there.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

It epitomizes intolerance that must be kept out of the church if we are going to draw people in and save them.

2. Because he taught that only those who confessed he was the Christ and the only way to heaven would receive eternal life.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

This shows a narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and exclusiveness that rejects the inclusive nature of God's love.

3. Because he used negative, insensitive and politically incorrect speech.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

To condemn people as being luke-warm and unacceptable is devastating to people's self-esteem.

4. Because he believed worship that is devoid of Law and Gospel is meaningless, and worship that is heartless and mindless is hypocritical.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

You can not offend people by saying their way of worship is wrong. You also have to accept people's sincerity and spirituality, regardless of what it may be.

5. Because he spoke and taught an objective truth that actually caused divisions between right and wrong.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

There are no absolute truths. Everyone is entitled to believe his or her own version of the truth.

6. Because he revealed that his followers would be hated, persecuted, and falsely accused for proclaiming the truth.

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

Instead of recognizing and illuminating differences, efforts should be given to work for common ground and to promote a common good.

7. Because he taught following him would mean "bearing a cross."

Why should this teaching, as well as its author be kept out of the church?

If we are going to attract people to Christianity, it has to be as positive as possible.

Talk about bearing a cross is offensive and a turn-off to most people.

Driven—Book Review

Book Review By Carl Schueler

Driven—By Fear, by Deprivation, and Now, By Love for Christ!
Betty Pfeiffer, 2011, Potter's Clay Publishing, Queen Creek AZ,
ISBN 978-0-578-07207-4; 100 pp; \$8.00

On Sunday, May 23rd we had a special visitor to our congregation. Betty Pfeiffer and her husband were traveling through Arizona and California, visiting sister congregations and sharing the story of their experiences in Laos. Based on these experiences, Betty authored the brief (readable in one sitting!), and shocking book outlining the biographies of two Hmong children of the Vietnam war.

These two Hmong children were born as the Vietnam war was raging—late 1960's—and came of age as the U.S. withdrawal resulted in wholesale reprisal by the North Vietnamese and Laotian governments against the Hmong people because of their role as U.S. sympathizers. As our nation ignored the Hmong plight, they were left entirely on their own to deal with the wrath of the victors. While the United States enjoyed the prerogative of retreating to our homeland with little if any interest in the impact of our withdrawal on our allies in the region, those allies suffered as described in this book.

The book is not pleasant to read—particularly if the reader is an American citizen born before 1955. This book is a stark reminder of the disastrous results of our “adventure” in Vietnam—a miserably managed “police action” which killed over 58,000 Americans while never attempting to “win,” and then finally retreated leaving the faithful Hmong allies to suffer atrocities that make John McCain's years in the “Hanoi Hilton” seem indeed like a comfortable hotel stay in comparison.

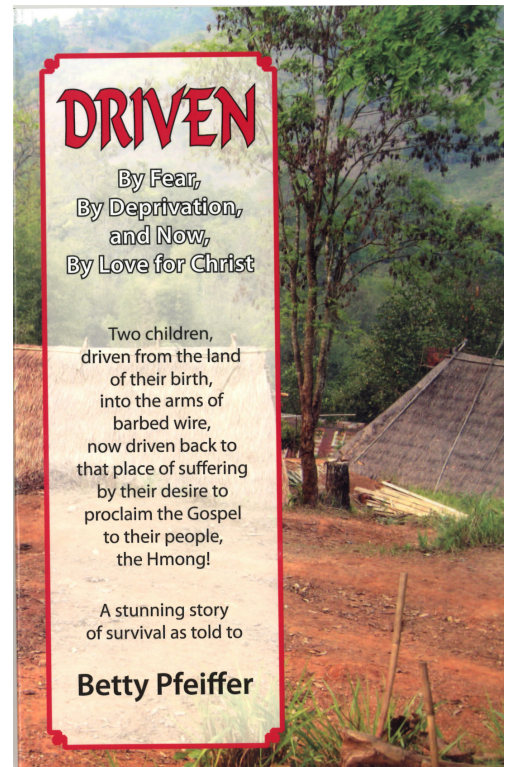
The only good that seemed to have come of the Hmong experience was that those Hmong who escaped were able to establish lives here. *Driven* describes two such experiences—one of a young “woman” (14 years old) and the other of her then recently betrothed.

These young folks (now in their 40's) escaped Laos about 1980 to the United States with their families—that is, with what was left of their families—after several harrowing months of being jungle prey, with many dying of hunger or disease. In the U.S., they were educated, worked, and eventually were “driven” (by their love for Christ) back to their still miserable homeland to provide Christian ministry to the Hmong.

If you think you have ever experienced hardships in your American life (other than—perhaps—jungle warfare in Vietnam), this book will make you feel blessed and humbled—not only because we've been spared the kind of horrors the Hmong experienced, but because our nation's decisions in the mid'60's and early '70's contributed to the Hmong misery. Not one of our nation's finest moments—either then or in retrospect now. It's no wonder Vietnam veterans were treated badly here. We wanted to forget the war, and therefore wanted vets to shut up and disappear! Neither veterans nor the Hmong will let us forget.

May God bless the Christian Hmong missions in Laos!

Editor's Note: While a copy of the book, “Driven,” is not in the church's library in the fellowship hall, a number of copies are available from the members. You may speak to Carl, or to Pastor Proeber to borrow a copy.





The FESTIVAL of the REFORMATION

October 30, 2011 + 4:00 pm
St. Paul's First Lutheran Church

5244 Tujunga Avenue + North Hollywood, California
(818) 761-1846

+ Preachers +
Rev. Paul Meitner, Rev. Brian Diring, & Rev. David Bostedt

Special Event Coming in November

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 7:00 pm



Jonathon Roberts and Emily Clare Zempel, members of Sure Foundation Lutheran Church (WELS) in New York City, will be visiting Our Redeemer to play an exciting concert of original music.

This event grows out of their non-profit organization "Spark and Echo Arts" which has the goal of creating a fully "illuminated" Bible with a piece of art, music, or theater covering every passage.

Spend an evening enjoying vocal harmonies, piano, bassoon, clarinet and ukulele as Spark & Echo brings the Bible to life through song.

Spark & Echo
New Piano Rock, Art Songs & Vocal Harmonies

A freewill offering will be taken to support their ministry.

CORNER

DEVOTIONAL



“In Jesus’ Name”

“For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.” - *Matthew 18:20*

Bob was usually disappointed when he prayed and when he went to church. He was looking for answers, but they never really came. His prayer life seemed empty and repetitious. His worship life left him without direction and hope. This forced him to make a search. He tried talking to his friends and going to church with them. Nothing seemed to resolve his dilemma until one of his friends said, “Try praying in Jesus’ name.”

Since it sounded like a good idea, Bob decided to give it a try. Every prayer he ended with the words “in Jesus’ name.” Every time he worshiped he longed to hear those sought after words. While Bob heard and used the words regularly, he remained empty and disappointed. Bob’s mistake is one I can easily make.

It is easy to look at the words, “in Jesus’ name,” as a formula. It is easy to think, if I use them in my prayers, God will always answer my request. The same applies to my worship. If I worship in Jesus’ name, I will always feel good. There is one complication. “In Jesus’ name” is not a formula, rather it is the reason why I can pray and why worship is a blessing.

In Jesus’ name offers me confidence as well as peace. Because Jesus is who the Bible says he is, and because he accomplished everything the Bible said he would, his name is precious. In Jesus’ name I find the answer to all my needs and all my prayers. In Jesus’ name I receive full and free forgiveness for all my sins. In Jesus’ name I know God the Father will comfort and encourage me. In Jesus’ name I can have perfect peace to trust him even when I am at a loss for answers.

When Jesus offers me the invitation to come in his name, it is not a magic formula. It is the reason why I can pray to him, and why I can worship him. It is also the reason why I can trust Jesus will be with me, and with all who come together in his name.

Prayer Thoughts

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away all fear.

Dear name! The rock on which I build, my shield and hiding place,
My never failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace. Amen.

Christian Worship 358 st. 1 & 3

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as “podcasts.”