

Hutto Lutheran Newsletter



July 2011 Issue

Gathered and Sent in God's Love



From the Pastor's Desk:

SAID SO WELL

Occasionally, I read an article that seems to me to be so well said that I read it more than once and think it should be shared with others. Recently, Pastor Jennifer Ollikainen, an ELCA pastor, who is the congregational coordinator for the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod, wrote the following for *Seeds for the Parish*, an ELCA publication:

“When we affirm the covenant God made with us in Holy Baptism, we also affirm our commitment to ‘hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper’ (promises that we make as adults and parents when there is a baptism). That is, we recognize that gathering with the community of the baptized for worship is essential to our lives of faith.”

“Yet statistics show that worship attendance is declining. Even more, the threshold for what is considered ‘regular’ worship has decreased to every other week or less.”

“As the church, we must ask, ‘Why?’ Our lives are busy. The stores are open. Athletic practices are scheduled at the same time as worship. Worship may seem dull and out of touch with culture. We seek meaning in any number of places, making worship attendance one choice among many”

“At the heart of all these reasons,” Pastor Ollikainen writes, “is a crisis of faith. When hearing the word and sharing in the Lord’s Supper become a choice among many choices rather than the way of life for the baptized, we reveal our low expectations of God’s transforming and life-giving presence in the community of Christ gathered for worship. Do we really believe that God shows up and offers transformation through the worship of our congregation?”

“In the covenant God makes with us at baptism, God promises that we will encounter Christ’s living and transformative presence in the gift of worship. Although we can encounter Christ anywhere, the church is uniquely gifted with means of grace shared across time and space with its proclamation of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments in worship”

“In worship, we hear the word of God in the Scripture read, sung and proclaimed entwining our lives and voices with the gospel story that names us as participants in that story. The hopes of the generations of the faithful become our hopes. The word of God

becomes living and active in our lives leading us to how our lives show forth God's baptismal call to joy, service, and justice. We are transformed by the word to live lives awash with hope and purpose."

"The mission to share God's grace with the hungry, sick, outcast and hurting is named as our own as we share in the Lord's Supper. We partake of the abundant meal of mercy taking on the righteousness and love of Christ in grace, forgiveness and new life while also sharing in the struggles and needs of the world with the compassion of Christ. In the sharing of the Lord's Supper, our identity is one with the community of Christ. We are transformed by this meal to live lives awash with compassion and mercy."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

"How does (y)our congregation's practice of worship proclaim with confidence that God is living and active in word and sacrament, transforming the lives of those who are gathered? How does (y)our worship service re-form the assembly's identity as beloved children of God leading them (us) to live every day bathed in the mercy and compassion of God? How does (y)our congregation's decisions about music, technology and other God-given worship tools point beyond themselves to the living and active presence of God in worship? With God-given and diverse gifts, each congregation will answer these questions differently."

CONSIDER

"In the time of gathering, don't just welcome people to worship. Affirm the response to God's call to be in the presence of Christ as essential members of the body of Christ. Emphasize the participation of all generations and all education levels in worship. Plan worship services that engage all five senses. Doing so will offer places for all to participate, even those with disabilities."

RESPONDING

"Whenever the assembly participates in the proclamation or response to the word of God, leaders can remind the assembly that each member is an essential part of the proclamation of worship. Invite people to sing a hymn or song by saying, 'Please stand and join you voice in proclaiming the gospel by singing (this song).' Or, before the prayers of intercession note, 'we pray to God, confident that God's love reaches into the whole world,' in the worship folder."

"Worship leaders can specifically connect how the scripture readings for the day shape our lives as the assembly is sent into the world through the closing litanies, blessings, and dismissals. Collections, donations or participants in specific service ministries may be blessed and sent into service from worship. Various vocations, from students to health care workers to teachers, may be affirmed in their baptismal vocations in everyday life."

"For every community of faith, the forming of the body of Christ for worship is a gift of transformation and re-formation through word and sacrament promised to us in Holy Baptism. We remember our identities primarily as children of God. Worship is a life-giving gift of God's presence that leaves us with the desire for more, each week in worship and in our everyday lives."

As I read and re-read these words written by Pastor Ollikainen, I began thinking about how important worship has been in keeping me grounded in the faith bestowed upon me in baptism so long ago. Even as a college student, I attended worship faithfully. As a teenager, who for the sake of having a job had to work on Sundays, I asked my employer if I could come in to work at 10:00 am every Sunday just so I could attend worship at 8:30 am. When I have not been a pastor of a congregation, Sharon and I have always sought out an assembly of the baptized with whom to worship on Sundays.

As a pastor, I have been stressing the importance of “every Sunday worship” for the last 40 years of ministry. Yes, it was an issue 40 years ago as I began my ministry as a pastor. I remember writing a newsletter article about this over 40 years ago for the congregation I served as pastor in Bluffton, Ohio. So perhaps not much has changed in a whole generation of 40 years. What I do know and firmly believe is that all of our lives will be better if we faithfully attend worship, hearing and singing the word of God, and receiving the Lord’s Supper.

As a pastor, I have devoted much of my life to leading worship. This is an important part of my identity, of “who I am” as one of the baptized. Only by the “grace of God” am I able to do this. Only through the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” am I able to do this at all. Each Sunday I thank God for helping me do what I do. Each Sunday I hope and pray that perhaps through my doing what I do, by the “grace of God” that lives might be transformed or re-formed to be more like Christ’s own life and ministry.

As the baptized, for almost 2000 years, attending worship has been an important part of Christian identity, of “who we are” as Christians, as children of God who have received in our baptism the blessed assurance of God’s everlasting presence with us in our lives and God’s eternal blessing of salvation and eternal life. God keeps the promises God made to us in Baptism.

And so I invite and encourage you to adopt a life-style that includes “every Sunday worship.” As God keeps his promises to us, we are promised better and more-fulfilling lives.

Blessings,
Pastor Mark



Newsletter Articles!

If you have articles for the Newsletter please e-mail them to the office by the 20th of each month. I know you would like to have your committee’s progress in the newsletter so please send it to hlcoffice150@yahoo.com. If a member has something special going on during that month we can publish that too. Thanks



Vacation Time is Here

When summer comes the temptation is to plan your vacation and leave all of your cares behind you. This year please do not forget your church during the summer. We still need all of your time, talents, and financial support. The pews on Sundays are sparsely filled and we miss seeing our regular church going members and friends during June and July. We hope everyone has a safe and memorable summer.

By Barbie Johnson



Food Pantry:

The Food Pantry was featured on Fox 7 News and boy did the donations come in. We also had an article in the Hutto Newspaper which brought some donations. The pantry helps the Hutto community with one to two bags of food every two weeks for citizens. We help over 100 people monthly. If you missed out on donating here are some items we can use:

Needed items are: Rice - 1 lb bags, Beans - 1 lb bags, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Canned meats: Chicken, Spam/Treet, etc., All kinds of toiletries and laundry soaps are also in great demand. Donations of these items would be greatly appreciated! I can personally tell you that the food provides a wonderful blessing for those who are in our community that need a helping hand.

We are always looking for more volunteers who only work a couple hours on Saturday mornings from 10 until noon. Come by and lend a hand. Don't forget our Saturday is the first Saturday each month.

By Barbie Johnson

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY





July Birthdays

- 02 Nancy Johnson
- 04 Emily Fowler
- 05 Lindsay Stromberg Fletcher
- 06 Mason Stern
- 08 Dagny Rydell
- 12 Rey Segura
- 15 Linda Sladek,
Melanie Stern
- 18 Julia Schmidt
- 20 Mark Merkord
- 21 Ron Whitfield
- 23 Augusta Stromberg
Brandon Merkord
- 26 Lauren Johnson,
Justin McGary
- 31 Christy Noren,
Mary Ann Whitfield

July Baptismal Anniversaries

- 01 Iola Sturm
- 04 Austin Olson
- 17 Matthew Lidell
Cassie Stromberg
- 19 Barbie Johnson
- 20 Brandon Sladek
- 28 Emily Page



SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Johnathan Davis, Louis Hirsh, Dennis Tangemann, Lucas McGary, Jason Edwards, Kasey Taylor, Brighten Miller, Grant Carter, Jerrad Ramsey, Scott Ellwart, Chaplain Randy Curry, Reid Allamon.



Online Order deadline: July 24th at midnight
Oder at the box: July 22nd at 5:00pm
Distribution: July 30th at 9:30am – 10:30am



Prayer List:

Lois Stern, Ansel Holmstrom, Sue Holmstrom, Carol Greiner, Augusta Stromberg, Dennis Johnson, Judy Reswik, Steve Robles Jr., Larry & Darlene Rydell, Vee Fowler , Anthony Neilsen, Ron Whitfield, Don Shephard and Judy Gardai.

Continuing Prayer List:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Carl Lidell * | Ron Whitfield* | Carol Greiner* | Bertha Stern* |
| Winnie Huffman | Cole Headrick | Lois Haag* | |



VBS July 25th – 29th
6:00pm – 8:30pm

If you would like to help with planning or to participate please contact Brenda Graham at 759-1314
or Lois Haag at 352-3590.

July 2011

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 | Boy Scouts 7PM Property 7PM | | | Weight Watchers | | Food Pantry 10-noon |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30am | Boy Scouts 7PM Property 7PM | | | Weight Watchers | | Food Pantry 10-noon |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30am Grad Pot Luck luncheon 11:30am | Worship & Music 6PM Boy Scouts 7PM | | Christian Ed 7pm Outreach 7:30pm | | | Food Pantry 10-noon |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30am | Boy Scouts 7PM | Council Meeting 6:30PM | Women's Bible Study 9:30AM | Weight Watchers | | Food Pantry 10-noon Angel Food 9:30- 10:30AM |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30am | VBS 6:00- 8:30pm | VBS 6:00- 8:30pm | VBS 6:00- 8:30pm | VBS 6:00- 8:30pm | VBS 6:00- 8:30pm | Angel Food 9:30- 10:30AM Almquist 10:00am- 3:00pm |
| 31 | | | | | | |
| Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30am Cook Baby Shower | | | | | | |

